THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF JOHN WESLEY

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JULY, 1965
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
TULANE UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
BY

Thomas Wm. Madron
THOMAS WM. MADRON

APPROVED: Warren Roberts, Jr.
WARREN ROBERTS, JR.
Chairman

David R Deener
DAVID R. DEENER

John Gillespie
JOHN S. GILLESPIE

William W. Shaw
WILLIAM W. SHAW

Kenneth N Vines
KENNETH N. VINES

PREFACE

As the title of this study indicates, its purpose is to examine the political thought of John Wesley. The term "political thought" has been used in preference to "political theory" or "political philosophy" because of its more comprehensive character and should be understood to include both "theory" and "philosophy." "Political philosophy" may be taken to be the study of underlying principles of human morals, character, and behavior as these apply to politics (i.e., the authoritative allocation of values for a society). "Political theory" is taken to designate statements which stipulate the apparent relationship of observed political phenomena which have been verified to some degree. Finally, "political thought" is defined as a total set of political ideas, principles, opinions, theories, and philosophies. Thus, in this dissertation there will be an attempt made to analyze the political thought of John Wesley rather than simply his political theory or philosophy.

An important element of Wesley's political thought is the relationship between it and his theology and his ethics. Thus, in broad perspective, the present study will be concerned with Wesley's political thought and the theology from which it is derived. Particularly important are the concepts which Wesley held concerning God and man. With respect to the former, the distinction between God as sovereign and God as governor is important. With reference to the latter, the problem of evil and the conceptualization of sin are important. From these ideas in turn stem Wesley's political thought.

The importance of such a study as that proposed, in addition to filling a gap in scholarship, is that it will provide insight into the content of the political ideas of a major historical figure. Such a study should perhaps contain a lesson in what ought to be the purpose of politics -- a problem, incidentally, with which science (construed narrowly) cannot deal. Perhaps the obvious assumption upon which this work is based is that what may broadly be categorized as value theory has relevance and meaning in the study of politics. The foregoing will remain an assumption, for this dissertation is not designed to test such a supposition. Traditionally, of course, value theory has played an important role in the development of the study of politics, and if the term "political science" is used in its historic sense, certainly value theory must remain important.

Although Wesley's political thought arose from his theology, he nonetheless held that systematic observation of politics was essential to an understanding of the political system. His methodological position was based upon an acceptance, in part, of eighteenth century empiricism. While he apparently accepted empirical philosophy, an ambivalent element arose in his attempts to reconcile knowledge of God through faith with knowledge achieved through empirical observation. As a result of French rationalism and British empiricism as these were developed in the eighteenth century, western philosophy has come to make a sharp dichotomy between subject and object in epistemological speculations. Unlike many of the thinkers since the eighteenth century, Wesley refused to make this epistemological distinction. As a result of this, and as a result of the fact that at least an element of the distinction did creep into his philosophy, Wesley's epistemology became somewhat confused. Nowhere is this problem more apparent than in Wesley's philosophy of science which is applicable to the study of both social and physical phenomena.

Nowhere in the Wesleyan corpus is there a direct attempt to delineate a specific method for the study of politics. It is possible, however, to suggest what he would probably have said and this is based largely upon his logical and scientific works. At one point Wesley did suggest that if "an inquiry were properly made, so that the real state of the nation might be clearly and distinctly shown, it might be attended with excellent consequences."[1] The consequences, Wesley thought, might be governmental policies which would promote the general welfare and redress and prevent "numerous evils." This explicitly suggests that Wesley thought that close study of political and social problems should be converted into governmental action in a positive manner. This implies that the study of politics, for Wesley, should be directed toward the establishment of rational and humane public policy.

---

[1] John Wesley, A Serious Address to the People of England, With Regard to the State of the Nation, in The Works of John Wesley (14 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d., photo offset from the authorized edition published by the Wesleyan Conference Office in London, England, 1872), Vol. XI, p. 141. These volumes are hereinafter referred to as Works, with appropriate prescripts (Journal, Thoughts upon Slavery, etc.) and postscripts (Sermon cx, etc.).

The first element in Wesley's philosophy of science is that of empiricism. As will be subsequently documented, Wesley followed Locke, Berkeley,[2] and Hume in accepting the philosophy of empiricism. Only the external world that can be apprehended by sensory perception was to be considered real (see Chap. III, p. 75). Wesley's ambivalent epistemology is illustrated in his somewhat frustrated attempts to reconcile his empiricism with his view that faith produced a form of knowledge (of God) not unlike the kind of knowledge produced by sense perception.[3]

In any event, knowledge of the external world, whether social, physical, or biological, was gained through sense perception. The import of empirical philosophy for science is suggested by Wesley in his proposals for a descriptive and experimental science and in his doubts about building theories prematurely.[4] He did think, however, that empirical data should be organised in a logical manner familiar in the study of mathematics, although all his scientific thought was directed toward the establishment of good social policies.

---

[2] The relationship of Wesley's thought to the thought of Locke and Hume will be examined in detail elsewhere. Little will be said of Berkeley, however, for Locke and Hume are more relevant to Wesley. For Wesley's earlier attitudes toward Berkeley, see The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, ed. John Telford (8 vols.; London: The Epworth Press, 1931), Vol. I, pp. 23-25 (to his mother, November, 1725). These volumes are hereinafter referred to as Letters.

[3] Works, Vol. V, p. 9 (Sermon i); Vol. VII, p. 195 (Sermon cvi).

[4] Primitive Physic (Preface), Works, Vol. XIV, p. 310; The Desideratum (Preface), ibid., p. 242; A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation: Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy (Preface), ibid., p. 301.

Wesley explains the methodological problems in science more particularly in his A Compendium of Logic. In this work he points out that scientific theory is dependent upon both induction and deduction: "the former proceeds from sensible and particular things, to intelligible and universal; the latter, from intelligible and universal things, to sensible and particular."[5] It would follow that beginning with the empirical acquisition of data it would be possible to work out the logical relationship among such data through the use of induction, then have predictive capabilities through deduction. For Wesley, mathematics was the discipline after which science should be modeled in terms of logical method. Mathematicians, he pointed out, define their terms, lay down their axioms, add their postulates, and demonstrate their propositions, taking care to base them on the truths that have already been proven or defined. "If the same method cannot be strictly observed in other sciences, yet doubtless it may be imitated. And the nearer any method approaches to this, the more perfect and useful it is."[6] For Wesley, empiricism was to be systematized through the use of logic and mathematics.

---

[5] A Compendium Of Logic, Works, Vol. XIV, p. 182. Compare this with Marshall Walker, The Nature of Scientific Thought (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 26. The rules of method which Wesley elaborates (Logic, pp. 182-183) are nearly identical with those of Maurice Natason (ed.), Philosophy of the Social Sciences (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 12.

In terms of human behavior Wesley categorically rejected rigid determinism, whether sacred or secular.[7] But he did, apparently, accept the notion that human behavior is conditioned by social and physiological characteristics.[8] In the final analysis Wesley seems to have adopted some sort of probability theory.[9] He thought that most attempts at explanatory theories were more or less "probable" to the extent to which they were based on empirical evidence. According to Wesley's view, very few explanatory theories in any field were so well established that they could be stated in categorical terms. He saw in the results of a systematic empirical science a demonstration of the "amazing power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator."[10] In the phenomena of nature (whether physical, biological, or social) Wesley said the "wisdom of God is displayed."[11] This review of Wesley's philosophy of science must be in the context of the unique purpose of science. It was the purpose of science to raise the level of human existence. Any inquiry which was to raise the level of human existence, however, had to be "made with the greatest accuracy," and the hypotheses on which it was based were to be "stated with all possible exactness."[12] Hence, there was the closest relationship between a "pure" science and an "applied" or "policy" science.

---

[6] Logic, p. 183.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Thoughts upon Necessity, Works, Vol. X, pp. 462-474. This is further substantiated by his view that the bestiality or alleged bestiality of the Negro under slavery was due primarily to the socialization to which the Negro slave was subjected. This will be discussed further below.

[9] The Desideratum, p. 242.

[10] A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation, p. 302.

[11] Ibid., p. 301.

As a final note to this preface, acknowledgment must be made of the debt of gratitude to those who made this study possible. Perhaps Tulane University should be mentioned first as the institution which made the completion of this author's graduate education a reality. More particularly must be mentioned the faculty of the Department of Political Science and especially the guidance and tutelage of Dr. Warren Roberts. Last, but by no means least, must be noted my long-suffering wife, Beverly, whose encouragement and salary saw us through.

---

[12] A Serious Address, loc. cit., p. 141.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE ii

Chapter

I. BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY. 1

- Politics and Society in England 2
- The Wesley Family 4
- Wesley's Education. 6
- Mission to Georgia. 13
- After Georgia 16
- Conclusion. 19

II. THE THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT 21

- The Theology of God 21
  - God's Role Functions. 21
  - God as Sovereign. 23
  - God as Governor 31
- The Theology of Man 36
  - The Problem of Evil 38
  - The Doctrine of Sin 39
  - Freedom 49
  - Conscience. 51
  - Man's Social Nature 54
  - Ethics. 55
- Conclusion. 63

III. ELEMENTS OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS CONCEPT OF GOD 65

- Power and Authority 65
  - The Problem of Authority. 65
  - The Concept of Power. 67
  - Wesley on Power 68
  - Wesley on Authority 70
  - Power and Authority: Summary 72
- Natural Rights and Natural Law. 74
  - Wesley's Doubts 74
  - Rights in Wesleyan Thought. 77
  - The Contract Theory 78
  - Assessment. 79
- Property. 81

Chapter Page

Equality. 83
  Wesley's Equalitarianism. 83
  The Theology of Equality. 85
  Implications of Equality. 86
Liberty 87
  The Nature of Liberty 88
  The Concern for Liberty 89
  The Content of Liberty. 91
  The Threat to Liberty 93
  The Assessment of Liberty 94
Order and Change. 96
  The Need for Order. 96
  The Basis for Change. 97
  The Right of Revolution 98
Justice 99
Conclusion. 101

IV. ELEMENTS OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS THEOLOGY OF MAN. 103

Order and Change. 104
  The Need for Order. 104
  The Possibility of Change 106
Property. 109
Equality. 113
  Racial Equality 114
  Social Equality 116
Justice 119
Forms of Government 123
Representation and Parliamentary Reform 125
  Wilkes and Representation 127
  The American War and Representation 129
  Wesley's Toryism. 131
Functions of the State. 133
  Economic Relations. 134
  Education 137
  Health and Medicine 139
  International Relations 142
Conclusion. 147

V. CHURCH AND STATE IN WESLEYAN POLITICAL THOUGHT. . . 151

The Church in the Eighteenth Century. 154
Wesley's Doctrine of the Church 157
  The Church as a Community of Believers. 158
  The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ 160
  The Church as a Juridical Body. 161
Establishment 174

Chapter Page

Roman Catholic Toleration 176
Administration and Church Government. 180
Conclusion. 184

VI. CONCLUSIONS 188

Wesley's Socialization. 188
The Theological Framework 189
Politics and the Theology of God. 192
Politics and the Theology of Man. 196
Church and State. 200
Assessment of Wesley's Politics 203
Wesley and Christian Political Philosophy 204
Wesley's Influence on Society and Politics. 208
Summary 211

APPENDIX: WESLEY AS A POLITICAL EDITOR AND AUTHOR. 213

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 236

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Although this study is not primarily biographical, and while the outlines of Wesley's life are well known, it is perhaps necessary to include an essay dealing with those aspects of his life which influenced his theological and political thought.[1]

---

[1] Except where indicated this essay is based on the following primary and secondary sources taken collectively. The interpretation is, of course, the author's own.

In addition to the Letters and the Works, already cited, see John Wesley, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, ed., Nehemiah Curnock (8 vols.; London: The Epworth Press, 1916, 1960), hereinafter referred to as Journal. **As for secondary sources, see especially:** G. C. Cell, The Rediscovery of Wesley (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935); Eliza Clarke, Susanna Wesley (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1886); W. L. Doughty, John Wesley: Preacher (London: The Epworth Press, 1955); Maldwyn Edwards, John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1955); J. Brazier Green, John Wesley and William Law (London: The Epworth Press, 1945); V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961); Thomas Walter Herbert, John Wesley as Editor and Author (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940); George Lawton, John Wesley's English (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962); Umphery Lee, John Wesley and Modern Religion (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1936); Albert M. Lyles, Methodism Mocked (London: The Epworth Press, 1960); Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1939); Elizabeth Kristine Nottingham, The Making of an Evangelist (Gettysburg, Pa.: Ph.D. Thesis, printed for the Author by Times and News Publishing Co., 1938); Maximim Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937); J. E. Rattenbury, The Conversion of the Wesleys (London: The Epworth Press, 1938); Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962); Oscar Sherwin, John Wesley: Friend of the People (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961); John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Advance of Methodism (2nd ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1955); John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Religious Societies (3rd ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1955); John S. Simon, John Wesley: The Master Builder (London: The Epworth Press, 1927); John S. Simon, John Wesley: The Last Phase (London: The Epworth Press, 1934); F. J. Snell, Wesley and Methodism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900); Robert Southey, Life of Wesley (London:

Politics and Society in England

Throughout the period of Wesley's life (1703-1791), political conflicts must be seen in the light of the over-riding problem of an evolving interpretation of the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89.

At the same time, England was changing socially and economically. At its beginning England was largely an agricultural and mercantile nation; by the end of the century it was well on its way to becoming a great industrial power. Religion, too, had its

---

George Bell and Sons, 1890); John M. Todd, John Wesley and the Catholic Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958); Luke Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley (3 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872). Other works on Wesley have been consulted but these are far too specialized to include here and are cited at appropriate places throughout the dissertation.

In addition to the foregoing studies of Wesley the following general books on the eighteenth century have proven helpful: M. S. Anderson, Europe in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961); Walter Jackson Bates, From Classic to Romantic (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946); Louis I. Bredvold, The Literature of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (New York: Collier Books, 1962); John Richard Green, A Short History of the English People (New York: A. L. Burt Co., n.d.); M. Dorothy George, England in Transition (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953); Paul Hazard, The European Mind (New York: World, 1963); Louis Kronenberger, Kings and Desperate Men (New York: Vintage Books, 1959); J. O. Lindsay (ed.), The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. VII, The Old Regime (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); Harold J. Laski, Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham (London: Home University Library, 1919); Harold J. Laski, The Rise of European Liberalism (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962); Dorothy Marshall, Eighteenth Century England (New York: David McKay, 1962); H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957); G. M. Trevelyan, History of England (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956) Vol. III; A. S. Turberville, English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957); Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961).

problems. The Restoration had attempted to kill the religion of the dissenters and the Roman Catholics. The age of Queen Anne attempted to undermine religion by draining it of its vitality. There were constant attempts by the dissenters and Latitudinarians to liberalize and broaden religious liberty, though there were sometimes relapses. The first half of the century saw the development of a climate of literary optimism which resulted in a status quo (or conservative) political philosophy by both Whigs and Tories. As the century neared the end of its first quarter, this optimism, which was neither joyous nor hopeful, came to be a glorification of things as they were. This attitude led to an abhorrence, later, of both Wesleyan "enthusiasm" and the "atheism" of the enlightenment and of the French Revolution. During most of the century, too, war between France and England was almost a constant factor. It is in this milieu that Wesley was born and reared.

Politics in England at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries was in a state of change and ambivalence. On the one hand the principle of constitutional monarchy seemed fairly well assured by the combined events of the Restoration (1660) and the Glorious Revolution (1689). On the other hand England was still just learning to live with this relatively novel form of constitution. While there were many ramifications of the Revolution Settlement, the one thing it unalterably did was to limit the extent and power of the Monarchy. It was this aspect of the Settlement which impressed Wesley most. Another result of the

Revolution was the bi-polarization of British politics which laid the foundation for the two-party system.[2]

Precise principles of the early two-party system are difficult, if not impossible, to state. Roughly speaking, it may be said that the Whigs were the primary defenders of the principles of limited monarchy and parliamentary government embodied in the Revolution Settlement, coupled with religious toleration and the interests of the banking and commercial classes. Whiggism, however, as G. P. Gooch has made clear, is not to be equated with republicanism or democracy. The Tories, on the other hand, generally supported royal prerogative, High Church doctrine, and the interests of the landed gentry. These delineations may not be taken too far, for there were certainly Tories who favored more religious toleration than some Whigs and who were equally in favor of the Revolution Settlement. Likewise, there were Whigs who were more interested in the rights of the landed gentry and less interested in the rights of dissenters.

The Wesley Family

The household in which John was reared was itself a peculiar blend of nonconformist morality, High Church Anglican theology, and Jacobite and Tory politics. John's father, Samuel, and his mother,

---

[2] George L. Cherry, Early English Liberalism (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962), pp. 155-168; and G. P. Gooch, English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 292-299.

Susanna, were both descended from rather determined nonconformist stock, though both had rejected their nonconformist background prior to marriage. Both Samuel and Susanna were strong-willed and this led to some family conflict from time to time. Samuel's allegiance to the Church of England revolved, no doubt, around its liturgy, its loyalty to the crown, and its piety. Samuel himself, though a Tory, supported the Revolution Settlement. Susanna was, on the other hand, an uncompromising Jacobite. This difference of political opinion led to a brief separation between Samuel and Susanna a short time before John's birth. In 1695 Samuel was appointed to the living of Epworth as a reward for his literary support of the monarchy. The remainder of his life was spent at Epworth, although he added to it in 1725 the more poorly endowed rectory of nearby Wroot. It was in this atmosphere of High Church Anglicanism and Tory and Jacobite political philosophy that John was to acquire many of the religious and political ideas that he held for life.

John Wesley was the fifteenth child and second surviving son of his parents. His elder brother, Samuel, Jr., was twelve years his senior, and until Charles was born four years later in 1707, John had little male companionship. John's early years were spent in the midst of a sisterhood dominated by a matriarch. This probably accounts for the streak of femininity in John's character, and though he was well-liked by men, he always seemed to feel more at home in female society. The regimen for children which Mrs. Wesley accepted was rather different from that suggested by twentieth century educators and psychologists. It tended to be austere, but not to the point of cruelty. Susanna believed that the cardinal factor in the development of a child was obedience. Basic to the notion of obedience was the theory that the will of a child had to be conquered. This approach to child-rearing led some of the Wesley children to rebel, but all were always dependent on Susanna. All of the Wesley children were trained early in book-learning and prayer, and Susanna taught reading and writing to her children for about six hours a day. Both the religious life and the amusements of the children were carefully regulated, and their basic ideas about God were derived primarily from their mother.

Wesley's Education

When John was eleven he left Epworth for London as a foundation scholar at the Charterhouse, a boarding school, on the nomination of the Duke of Buckingham. A gap in the evidence concerning Wesley's early life occurs during this period and little is known of his experiences. But his memories of the days at the Charterhouse were apparently pleasant. He remained there until 1720 at which time he began his undergraduate career at Oxford. At this point Wesley was enthusiastic, scholarly minded, and pious by inclination. While his subsequent life was to undergo reorientation, many of his mature religious and political ideas evolved out of the educational and spiritual background of Epworth, reinforced by his experiences at Oxford.

The established power in England, whether of church or state, has always looked to Oxford for support, and the university was still the zealous protagonist of the established church and state when Wesley entered. He found, therefore, a political climate not dissimilar to that with which he had been familiar at Epworth rectory. These two elements, home environment and university environment, must rank high as major factors of socialization and may be discerned in minimal influence by the arguments and language he used and at its maximum by the views which he consistently propagated and which were founded upon these sources. Christ Church, Wesley's undergraduate college, was the largest and most distinguished of the University colleges. He had uniformly good relations with his tutors, and while there is little information available concerning his studies, he doubtless performed conscientiously the arid exercises necessary for his degree. In 1724 Wesley graduated as a bachelor of arts but remained at Oxford. The decision to stay at Oxford had a twofold significance: first, it represented a decision to continue his education and go on for the master's degree; second, it implied the probability that he would follow his father and brother and be ordained.

Throughout this period Wesley hoped for a vacant college fellowship which would provide financial security and the opportunity for further reading and study (until marriage or preferment). After his graduation Wesley prepared himself for ordination and waited for the hoped-for fellowship.

The decision for ordination represents one of the more important decisions Wesley made for it set his vocational goals and direction.[3] His parents' reaction to ordination was somewhat divided. His father stressed the need for more learning while his mother emphasized the more practical aspects. His father tended to feel that John should delay ordination but Susanna's powerful advocacy of early ordination carried the day. John Wesley was ordained deacon on September 19, 1725 and priest in September, 1728. Wesley was always to refer to his ordination as the source of his authority for his various tasks, especially his ordinations of ministers for America much later in life.

After 1725 the greater part of Wesley's time was spent in further study. His interests were wide and included theology, philosophy, languages, history, literature, and natural science. Not so much time was spent in reading and study that Wesley could not break away for discussion and more frivolous activities. He frequented the coffee-houses and local taverns with his friends, among them John Burton, who is noted for the attempt to update the Oxford curriculum to include such "modern" studies as Newton and Locke. Wesley developed a fairly congenial personality and was a well-liked conversationalist, a trait later applauded by such a man as Samuel Johnson.

---

[3] It must be mentioned that there has been a considerable argument among Wesleyan scholars over whether the decision to be ordained was less important, equally important, or more important than his later "Aldersgate" experience. Methodist scholars have generally weighted the Aldersgate "conversion" most heavily (see below). This is due, perhaps, to the fact that this experience would tend to reinforce the evangelical Protestant concern with the vertical relationship between God and man (see Chapter V). Scholars in the Catholic tradition have emphasized the decision to be ordained. Many scholars who have given greatest importance to the Aldersgate experience have tended to follow Tyerman rather uncritically. Piette, and Todd following Piette, represent the other extreme, rating ordination highly. V. H. H. Green and Schmidt point to the importance of both experiences for Wesley, and Green, especially, suggests that the decision for ordination set the direction of Wesley's life while the Aldersgate experience determined the method and approach his life would take.

A persistent problem throughout this period was the manner in which Wesley was to pursue his vocation. The possibility of a fellowship at Lincoln College had arisen in the summer of 1725 but there was still uncertainty regarding the outcome. Some pressure was exerted by the elder Wesley through the Bishop of Lincoln and what little opposition that had arisen disappeared in 1726. On March 17 John was elected to the vacant fellowship. At this time Wesley was also possessed by the notion of moral imperfection and this put him under some spiritual and emotional stress. This concern with his own imperfection and with the striving for perfection was brought about through the reading of Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying in 1725. The direction in which Taylor led Wesley was towards William Law's Christian Perfection and Serious Call. As a result of his reading of Taylor and Law, Wesley came to adopt a moral perfectionism which, while later modified, remained with him always. In the course of his university career, Wesley came to regard Law as a kind of oracle, and a close personal friendship developed between them (though this friendship was subsequently ruptured). It is possible that through his personal relationship with Law, Wesley may have adopted an element of Law's political thought (see Chap. V), though there is no documentary evidence for this.

Sally Kirkham, one among a small circle of young women with whom Wesley was friendly during this period, had introduced him to Thomas a Kempis's and Jeremy Taylor's writings in 1725. The discussions between Wesley and Sally Kirkham arising out of these works most profoundly influenced Wesley and also helped direct him to Law. It is possible to discern in Law's writings, even at this early date, the high conception of ethical Christianity which so attracted Wesley as well as the beginnings of the mystical detachment which finally repelled him. Law's two books made a deep impression on Wesley, even though he was able to see some of their defects. It was Law's influence, however, that accelerated Wesley's quest of perfect obedience to the law of God, which was a dominant concern at this time. It was perhaps as a result of Wesley's intense concern for moral perfection that his father, in 1725, felt compelled to caution him against mental inelasticity. Some years later Wesley characterized himself during this period as being "as much bigoted to my own opinions as you can be for your life . . . and I thought that all contrary opinions were damnable errors."[4] During the three years following his election to his fellowship in 1726, the more ascetic and religious side of his character gradually gained the upper hand. Although he tried, he found it difficult to blend a love of the present world with what he believed to be the teaching of Jesus.

---

[4] Letters, Vol. VIII, p. 271 (to Samuel Furly, March 1762).

During the year following his election Wesley spent a long summer as his father's curate, but returned to Oxford in September to prepare a portion of the somewhat barren exercise necessary for his master's degree. Family difficulties between his sister Hetty and his father complicated the summer of 1726. Of the entire Wesley family only John, and another sister, Mary, attempted to aid Hetty. The problem, a result of an unfortunate romantic entanglement involving Hetty as well as Samuel Wesley's dogmatic moral principles, caused John to be deeply concerned. He felt that there should be a reconciliation between Hetty and his father, and this feeling stemmed from his wider knowledge of the world and his deep concern with the idea of Christian love. The conflict led John to preach a sermon (on charity) against his father. By the time he returned to Oxford the tension had eased somewhat. At the university he continued his involvement with his many friends and he was elected Greek Lecturer, Moderator, and Claviger. He was not wholly happy, however, for he felt he was not making sufficient progress. On February 27, 1727, Wesley was examined and passed his master's degree. He was not eligible to take students until one of the current tutors left. Consequently, between 1727 and 1729 (except for short periods) he was able to take leaves of absence to assist his father. He returned to Oxford, however, in November, 1729, to act as tutor to the undergraduates and to assume his duties as a Moderator. Wesley taught theology, logic, and the classics and was originally allotted eleven students. He apparently acquired something of a reputation as a tutor of logic. His first book was written for his pupils and published in 1733. In that same year Samuel Wesley, due in part to failing strength, was pressuring John to return to Epworth, but John declined to leave Oxford.

Perhaps the most significant factor in the period after Wesley's return to Oxford in 1729 was his relationship with the Holy Club. The club had already been formed (largely by Charles) and John soon became its leader. At the beginning the Holy Club was a rather informal affair. Several young men at Oxford had agreed to band together for more concerted study and discussion of the classics and of theology. In 1730 William Morgan, one of the members of the Holy Club, introduced John Wesley to some of the prisoners in the local jail and to the problems of illness in the town. The members of the Holy Club took on these problems as projects and attempted to alleviate some of the distress. Wesley himself interpreted this as the beginning of the Methodist movement. Due to his greater religious activity, Wesley's prestige in the college deteriorated progressively until in August of 1733 he could write his mother that it was doubtful that he would have any more pupils after the few he then possessed.

Though the period after 1730 marked Wesley's deepest immersion into an ascetic life, he did not withdraw entirely from the normal social life of Oxford. Moreover, he occasionally made trips away from Oxford and one significant journey was in the summer of 1732 to see William Law at Putney. After their conversation Wesley began reading the mystical medieval work, Theologica Germanica, on Law's advice. It was also during this visit to London that he saw, for the first time, Colonel (later General) Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony of Georgia.

Mission to Georgia

Still in search of a medium in which he could express his vocation, John, as Oglethorpe's secretary, along with Charles, embarked for Georgia late in 1735. The decision to make this missionary journey was somewhat abrupt, coming as it did only shortly after Wesley had refused to return to Epworth in order to stay at Oxford. The trip to Georgia, however, marks a very real turning point in Wesley's life, although it ended up being one long series of painful experiences. On the ship to America John was dismayed at his own panic amidst the storms of the Atlantic and was impressed by the calm of a group of Moravians. This event itself led to a critical evaluation of the state of his own faith. The deep inner conviction of God's grace held by the Moravians came to influence Wesley to a great extent, though he never surrendered the "objective" standards of the Bible and the authority and tradition of the church. On shipboard, in America, and later in England, Wesley attempted to learn of Moravian faith. For the succeeding three or four years the Pietists were to exercise a considerable influence over Wesley though he was ultimately to reject their extreme reliance upon an emotional impulse.

The Moravian influence, which was sustained from about 1735 to about 1740, convinced Wesley that some kind of personal experience with God was valuable. After 1740, however, he came to reject the extreme individualism of the Moravian Pietists and charged them with antinomianism.[5] He came to regard this extreme individualism as subversive to authority in both church and state. A somewhat negative influence of the Moravians on Wesley persisted after 1740 in terms of his efforts to oppose Moravian views. Theologically and politically, then, the Moravian influence on Wesley revolved around the problem of the individual's relationship to God, first by an acceptance, and later by a rejection of the Moravian position.

Wesley's initial contact with his work in Georgia was pleasant enough, though he was dogged by the feeling that somehow he was not fulfilling the demands of the Gospel. In addition to his personal doubts, he was soon beset by problems with the people of Georgia. This was partly a result of his efforts to apply the rather rigid perfectionist ethics of Law under unsuitable conditions. At one point criticism of him became so extreme that even Oglethorpe was for a time estranged from Wesley. Among other things he was accused of embezzling funds of the Georgia corporation. Following this was an abortive love affair with Sophey Hopkey.[6] Wesley also failed in his missionary quest to the Indians, and his experiences with the Indians led in part to his rejection of the fiction of the "Noble Savage." It was also during his stay in Georgia that he came to have first hand knowledge of the problems of slavery, of which he quickly became critical. As a result of all these problems, but especially because of a defamation suit brought against him by Miss Hopkey, Wesley decided to lay his case before the Georgia Trustees, and on December 2, 1737, departed America.[7]

---

[5] Antinomianism is the theory that suggests that since the "real" Christian has been justified by God (saved), subsequent actions by that individual are wholly irrelevant. The most extreme proponents of this position have held that the saved individual is no longer bound by the law and is completely free. It is the total opposite of the position that an individual must abide by the letter of the law.

[6] Sophey Hopkey was a young woman with whom Wesley became romantically entangled. Sophey had marriage on her mind and when Wesley did not propose quickly enough she rather hurriedly married another man. The actions of Miss Hopkey both confused and irritated Wesley.

When he returned to England Wesley faced many problems. Among them were the conditions surrounding his leaving Georgia, the indecision regarding his vocational commitment, the relative failure of his mission to the Indians and colonists, and, soon, his disagreements with Law. Because of all these things his spiritual life was becoming increasingly darker, but at the same time he was seeking to clarify the more "objective" pattern of theological belief. During the period following his return, it also occurred to him to stop preaching altogether, though he was dissuaded from taking this course of action. Upon returning to England, and under the influence of the Moravian Pietists, Wesley took some of his frustrations out on William Law partly because it was Law's perfectionist ethics that had, to this point, been his guide. Wesley accused Law of not giving proper guidance especially with respect to the central place of faith in the crucified Christ in the process of salvation. Rather petulantly Wesley blamed Law for what were, after all, his own shortcomings. Law responded by pointing out that faith was an underlying assumption of both _Christian Perfection_ and _Serious Call_, and also by pointing to some similarities between the mystical _Theologica Germanica_ and the inner conviction of the pietistic faith. The rupture between Law and Wesley in 1738 was probably decisive, although the two had other differences which resulted in a final break in 1756. By the latter date Law was completely immersed in mystical detachment characterized by a severe lack of any clear doctrine of the atonement. By the mid-1740's Wesley had also broken with the Moravians as a result of their extreme reliance upon individual experience. Wesley came ultimately to have three objections to Law: 1) his ideals were vast and seemed unattainable to men of the eighteenth century; 2) Law did not seem to realize the existential problem of man's existence and its relation to Christianity; and 3) Law's ideal was too purely individualistic. The third point applied not only to his later mysticism but also to his earlier ethical perfectionism.

---

[7] The suit brought by Miss Hopkey was the result of Wesley's failure to allow her to take communion at the church. The basis of his refusal were alleged moral improprieties. The charges Wesley made were of an extremely trivial nature, although the law of the Church of England allowed him to refuse communion to anyone on such grounds. Wesley's confusion and irritation with Sophey's marriage is apparent in the charges he made. The defamation suit was brought as a result of Wesley's charges. Although the charges were dropped by the Georgia Trustees, this episode was to haunt Wesley later as opponents used it in attacks against him.

After Georgia

Wesley's various experiences during the early part of 1738 had led him to a state of despair. He looked within himself and was appalled with what he saw. Outwardly he had been a Christian almost to the point of perfection, if such was possible, but now all that he had done appeared as an act in a play. The Moravians, however, had given Wesley an element of hope and his intellectual assent to the doctrine of justification by faith moved Wesley to preach so vigorously that some of the London churches were closed to him. Psychologically, then, Wesley was prepared for the "Aldersgate" experience of May 24, 1738. It was at that time that he experienced his "conversion" while listening to a reading from Luther's commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans at a Moravian meeting. This experience conveyed to Wesley the feeling of emotional commitment to the Christian Gospel. This "conversion" experience set the vocational goals of Wesley and gave to him the vocational commitment (in terms of direction) he had been seeking.

While the conversion experience was important to Wesley, there has been a tendency for Methodist writers to inflate its value. It must be admitted that in the broad context of Wesley's life, his vocation (though not its direction) was confirmed at the time of his ordination. From the time of the Aldersgate experience, however, it became impossible for Wesley to be a cloistered academic, or to be satisfied with the life of a parish priest. In a sense, the Aldersgate experience merely confirmed for Wesley the direction for his vocation that had been in the process of development for some time. If one considers the totality of events from the time of Wesley's ordination to Aldersgate, it is difficult to interpret this experience as typical emotional revivalism. Following this experience Wesley toured Germany primarily for the purpose of observing the Moravians. He was impressed by the sense of community they exhibited, and this, though not the methods used, became for him a model on which the later Methodist societies were based.

By 1740 Wesley was well launched on his evangelical crusade in England. The first Methodist societies had been formed, and in 1744 the first Conference was held. In a sense, the remainder of Wesley's life is rather uninteresting from a biographical point of view. His mode of living until close to his death in 1791 was largely one of organizing Methodism, preaching, and writing; and a narrative of this period can be little more than a travelogue tracing his journeys through England, Scotland, and Ireland. In the period from 1740 to 1750 Wesley cultivated the friendship of Grace Murray, the woman he probably loved most deeply. Through the interference of Charles, however, she married one of Wesley's preachers and Wesley, on the rebound, married the widow, Mrs. Vazeille. This marriage proved to be disastrous and it ultimately failed many years later. She was occasionally an accomplice in public attacks on Wesley. She is more important as a negative influence than anything else. The catastrophic romantic life of John (and his brothers and sisters as well) can probably be attributed to the influence of his mother and his tendency to compare all other women to Susanna. In terms of the development of his thought, theological and political, the two women most important were Susanna Wesley and Sally Kirkham. The others had little direct influence. The period between 1740 and 1791 was occasionally marked with controversies between Wesley and others, including Law, the Moravians, and George Whitefield (over predestination). There were also controversies with those who disagreed with his control of Methodism. As subsequent chapters will illustrate, this period was not one of intellectual stagnation but consisted of expanding, refining, and sorting out ideas that had already had their birth. Almost all of Wesley's ideas have their antecedents prior to 1740, though often in a crude and unsophisticated form.

Conclusion

The early part of the eighteenth century produced a political climate which was, to a large extent, one of a placid conservatism expressed by both Whigs and Tories. This conservatism expressed itself in the Epworth household in a more dynamic manner as a defense of monarchy and the principles of monarchy. Thus Wesley was taught to fear God and honor the King, and his first knowledge of both religion and politics was derived from his parents with his mother's views predominating. This kind of conservatism was later reinforced by his friends and education. The former were largely of the same class as the Wesley family; the university atmosphere was one of staunch support for the King. Wesley's friends during his university days were instrumental in introducing him to the writings of those Christian thinkers devoted to the idea of Christian perfection and finally to Law. Through Law's concept of moral perfection there was imbedded in all of Wesley's thought a constant streak of idealism, which before his journey to Georgia was largely an uncritical idealism. Later, however, under the impact of both the traditional doctrine of original sin and his Georgian experiences, his views on perfection tended to be modified according to reality. His decision to be ordained fixed Wesley's vocation while his conversion experience fixed the direction of that vocation. The ordination was always, however, to be the source of his priestly authority no matter what his powers to convert others might be. While his ideas concerning politics and religion were not fixed by 1740, the broad outlines can be discerned. Likewise, the foundations for his humanitarian concerns were laid in the social work conducted by the Holy Club at Oxford. Most of all, Wesley acquired from his background prior to 1749 the characteristic modes of expression which would comprise the linguistic frame of reference for all his subsequent views.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Wesley's political thought was based upon his theology and his ethics. His ethics -- which were broader than his political thought -- originated in his theology. In order to analyze Wesley's political thought it is necessary, therefore, to have an understanding of the relevant theological concepts. Wesley's theology, for this purpose, may be divided into his theology of God and his theology of man.[1] His ethics arose as a subsidiary aspect of his views concerning God and man.

The Theology of God

God's "Role Functions"

Wesley made the distinction between God as "Creator" or "Sovereign" and God as "Governor," and it is this differentiation in the nature of God which has greatest implications for Wesley's political thought. Of the distinction between these "role functions" of God Wesley commented: "As Creator, [God] could not but act according to his own sovereign will: But as Governor he acts, not as a mere Sovereign, but according to justice and mercy."[2] He insisted on the absolute sovereignty of God no less vigorously than did the Calvinists. As sovereign (or creator) God acts according to his own will. Justice plays no part in the context of God's sovereignty. As sovereign God "may, in the most absolute sense, do what he will with his own."[3] Wesley never failed to stipulate, however, that "God reveals himself under a two-fold character with each other; but they are totally different."[4] When God acts as governor, as a "rewarder, or punisher, he no longer acts as a mere Sovereign, by his own sole will and pleasure, but as an impartial judge, guided in all things by invariable justice." Wesley concluded that these "ideas of God the Creator, the sovereign Creator, and God the Governor, the just Governor, [must] be always kept apart."[5] It was through the medium of God's role as governor that human freedom became possible. By acting justly God places a limitation on himself and it was in this sense that Wesley contended that too much should not be imputed to divine providence lest it interfere with man's free agency.[6] To the Calvinists it seemed that on the one hand Wesley made everything dependent on the divine grace, though on the other hand he spoke as if there were some efficacious causality in man "instrumental to his own salvation. In the opinion of the Calvinists, the sure indication of this was Wesley's assertion that grace is resistable."[7]

---

[1] Theology, as used here, is the study of the question of God and the relation of God to the phenomenal world. The phrase, "theology of man," is used to distinguish Wesley's ideas about God, *per se*, and his ideas about man's relationship to God. In this analysis, comment on Wesley's theology of God centers on God, while comment on Wesley's theology of man centers on man in relationship with God. If, in Wesley's thought, it was possible to study man apart from God, another phrase (e.g., "Wesley's anthropology") would be more relevant. In the context of Wesley's discussion of man, however, the term "theology of man" is useful.

---

[2] Journal, Works, Vol. IV, p. 102 (June, 1777).

[3] Thoughts Upon God's Sovereignty, Works, Vol. X, p. 361.

[4] Robert E. Cushman, "Salvation for All," ed. William K. Anderson, Methodism (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947), p. 107. Cushman errs in his analysis of Wesley, however, for he suggests, in trying to explain the seeming inconsistency in Wesley's thought between God as absolutely sovereign and man's free will, that Wesley's idea of freedom was wholly negative. That is, man could choose evil rather than God (rebellion against God), but man could not choose righteousness apart from grace. Actually, since God gave man the power to distinguish between good and evil in prevenient grace (see below), God, in a sense, makes it possible for man to choose either good or evil.

It is these differing "roles" which God plays that makes it possible for Wesley to label himself "Arminian" rather than "Calvinist." God as governor allows man, so to speak, to be free. In one sense God imposes self-restrictions on his omnipotence and omni-powerfulness. This, of course, gets into the rather difficult theological question as to whether an omnipotent being can limit his own omnipotence. This question, however, is out of the province of this dissertation.

God as Sovereign

From God's attribute as sovereign proceeds all God's grace, and it is through grace that man has anything. It is at this point, in "ascribing all good to the free grace of God," that Wesley comes closest to Calvinism.[8] In fact, according to Wesley, all that is created is a result of God's sovereignty. In a sermon "On Divine Providence" Wesley enumerated what he believed to be both the characteristics and some of the consequences of God's sovereignty.[9] The very possibility of salvation derives from this attribute. That is, God opens the possibility of salvation to all men. The actuality of salvation, however, derives from the attribute of God as governor. This is true in the sense that as governor God allows men to choose freely to have, or not to have, salvation. While it is true that man has everything through God's grace, yet God stops short, according to Wesley, of requiring that man be saved.

---

[5] Letters, Vol. I, p. 72 (to his father, January, 1731).

[6] Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 263 (to Miss March, April, 1777).

[7] Cushman, op. cit., p. 113.

Soteriology. -- The salvation of the individual (and through the individual, the social order) was a primary concern for Wesley. Traditionally there have been three approaches to the problem of who shall be saved. The first view, one attributed to St. Paul and St. Augustine and certainly held by Calvin, is that God determines precisely who shall and who shall not be saved. This view is known as predestination, double predestination, or the doctrine of limited atonement. The second major approach, held by Arminians and others in and out of Roman Catholicism and certainly held by Wesley, is that

---

[8] Minutes of Some Later Conversations, Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 284-285; William R. Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley (New York: Abingdon Press, 1946), p. 102.

[9] Works, Vol. VI, pp. 313-325 (Sermon lxvii).

God offers salvation freely to all men, desires that all should be saved, but in the final analysis allows man to respond (accept or reject) freely to him. Any other concept of the extent of salvation, so the argument runs, would make man a mere puppet and negate the essence of freedom. The third notion which has been held historically in the church, has been that of universalism, that is, the idea that holds that eventually God will save all men.[10]

The objection concerning man's free will is as logically valid against indiscriminate universalism as it is against the doctrine of selective salvation in Calvin. The primary difference between the two views is that for the Calvinist, heaven would be a society peopled by aristocrats, while for the universalist, it would be a mass society. Wesley's idea of God's grace was universal in that he thought God desired every man to be saved, but he also upheld (as indiscriminate universalism does not) the dignity of the individual by allowing him to make the choice between God and evil, even though the spark of freedom itself is a gift of God's grace.[11] This concept of the universality of God's desire that all men should have the possibility of salvation is a central feature in the structuring of Wesley's concept of equality.

---

[10] "Soteriology," Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Lefferts A. Leotscher (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1955), Vol. II, p. 1049.

[11] For further commentary see Cannon, op. cit., pp. 90-110; J. Brazier Green, John Wesley and William Law (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), p. 91; Collin W. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 33-34.

Justification. -- Related to the idea of God's sovereignty is the notion of justification by faith, which became the keynote of the Wesleyan revival. While God justifies man (and this is the necessary prerequisite for salvation), man plays a part in the process of salvation through repentance and faith (see sec. on Theology of Man). "Justification" is another word for pardon.[12] It is, according to Wesley, the pardon of original sin and forgiveness of the particular sins consequent upon original sin (for further discussion of this, see below). This has come about as a result of the mediatory action of Christ. The necessity for good works is not denied in this doctrine, but they follow, rather than precede, justification.[13]

---

[12] This is a relatively standard definition of the term "justification." The term, in its historic sense, does not refer to the state of man, but to his status. It is an act of God by which man is freed of the penalty of original sin. The term itself -- which is taken from Roman Law -- implies more than simply "not guilty." It carries with it the intention of God to deal with man as a son and heir. See Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, op. cit., pp. 1050-1051.

[13] For an expansion of this in Wesley's thought see the following: Minutes of Some Late Conversations, Works, Vol. VIII, p. 275; Works, Vol. VI, pp. 44-45 (Sermon xliii). The view that justification is purchased with the sacrifice of Christ presents the problem of the atonement. Wesley's idea of the atonement is a universal one, that is, Christ died for all men in order that all might be saved (Cannon, op. cit., p. 210). This harks back to the concept of free grace. Any righteousness which man might possess he gains through the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith (Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 299). Christ on the Cross represents the whole human race: "there He is the 'general savior of mankind,' the second Adam constituting a new covenant in which all are offered membership through the gift of faith." (Williams, op. cit., p. 86). See, also, Works, Vol. VII, p. 305 (Sermon cxviii); Letters, Vol. VII, pp. 9-10 (to a Roman Catholic, July, 1749); and Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 28-29 (to Dr. Free, August, 1758).

A significant question which is raised by any discussion of justification is how is justifying grace either apportioned to or apportioned by human beings? As Cannon remarks, the "Wesleyan reply is that justification is done through the agency of God acting in cooperation with, and not in violation of, free human response."[14] Justification is, therefore, the "gate of religion; but religion itself is the love of God and of all mankind."[15] Justification is the beginning of salvation, and salvation "can never be isolated from ethics, or the works of moral endeavor."[16] Finally, at the same time that the individual is justified, sanctification begins. If justification is the work of God for man, sanctification is the on-going work of God in man. Sanctification, taken in its minimum signification, is what makes goodness possible -- that is, it is not the good and gracious acts themselves, but the operation of God in man that enables man to produce those acts. Sanctification, in Wesleyan thought, is also progressive, culminating ideally in perfection. The doctrines of justification and sanctification have political implications in terms of the idea of equality, and in terms of the impact of the perfected individual as a force for good in society.[17]

---

[14] Cannon, op. cit., p. 115. [15] Ibid., p. 150.

[16] Ibid., p. 119. See also, pp. 77-86; John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 206; and Williams, op. cit., pp. 60-69.

[17] J. Brazier Green, op. cit., pp. 87-88; Williams, op. cit., p. 72.

Authority. -- In a sense, an attribute of God's grace is the authority he bestows upon the human institutions of church and state. In Wesleyan thought there was not a pre-social state, for Wesley adopted the idea of the natural sociability of man (see below). Presumably, then, there had always been some kind of social organization no matter how primitive. Man organized in church and state, however, needed authority to validate exercises of power. The church received authority as a result of God's incarnation in Jesus. The act of the incarnation was given an on-going character in history in the lives of individual Christians, and in the adminstration of the sacraments Christ bequeathed authority to the Apostles and their successors. In the state, government had authority, for any government had the divine command to inhibit the free play of sin. Wesley also thought that the right of the state to inflict capital punishment illustrated its God-given authority, for only God has the right to determine life and death. This is a rather weak argument at best (see Chapter III). Finally, from St. Paul's dictum that God ordains the powers that be, Wesley derived the last argument for the proposition that authority, and in some sense, the organization itself, is a grant of God's grace and is a gift man receives from God.[18]

---

[18] See, for example, John Wesley, Selections from John Wesley's 'Notes on the New Testament,' ed. John Lawson (Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, 1955), p. 198, notes on Romans 13:1, 1 Timothy 2:2, Matthew 26:52. Wesley noted, however, that Christians were not obligated to give up civil privileges to every insolent invader for these are received "as the gift of God." (Also, p. 199, notes on Acts 22:28.)

God and History. -- Related to the idea of grace is the problem of the relationship between God and human history. Wesley denied the pseudo-mechanistic theory (prevalent in the eighteenth century) that God was a great watchmaker who, in the universe, had fashioned a great mechanism, had wound it up, and was allowing it to run as a clock. In the story of the creation, in the accounts of the prophets, and above all, in the orthodox interpretation of the character of Jesus, Wesley saw God working in history. The concept of the atonement has already been alluded to. While Wesley admitted that "in the common course of nature, God does act by general laws," he nevertheless concluded (albeit naively) that God "has never precluded himself from making exceptions to them."[19] From the latter proposition he contended that God could, and sometimes did, influence the particular affairs, not only of the universe, or the world (in general), but of men.[20] Therefore, it is necessary to conclude that Wesley thought that God played a dynamic, not a static, role in human history. This conclusion is reinforced when Wesley's thought concerning property, war, and in some cases, even legislation, is analyzed.

Christian Perfection. -- Finally, in terms of God acting in man (offering his grace which is an act of a sovereign being), is the problem of Christian perfection. There are at least two elements to this concept: God acting in man and man responding to God. Perfection, according to Wesley, is entire sanctification. While it is God who effects any good which can come from man, Wesley believed that there was still the necessity for personal effort and a sense of struggle to will and effectuate the good. It will be recalled that sanctification taken in its minimal sense came at the same time as justification and, like justification, came through faith. However, while justification was good once and for all (unless the believer fell from grace), sanctification only started at the time of justification and was to continue progressively through faith -- exhibited in works -- throughout the life of the believer, ending, Wesley hoped, in perfection. Perfection, in its simplest definition, meant for Wesley the possession of the perfect motive (perfect love of God and love of man).

---

[19] Works, Vol. VI, p. 322 (Sermon lxvii).

[20] Ibid., p. 323.

Wesley was relatively consistent concerning his position on Christian perfection. That Wesley himself felt this to be true was demonstrated in _A Plain Account of Christian Perfection from the Year 1725 to the Year 1777_, which was drawn largely from his previous writings.[21] His concept of perfection was also influenced by Wesley's twofold conception of sin (see sec. on The Doctrine of Sin). By virtue of the fact that man was always somewhat tainted with original sin, even after being pardoned by God, and also because God was infinitely perfect while man could be only finitely perfect, man's perfection was relative to God's perfection and only God could be absolutely perfect. The perfect Christian could, however, come to have motives sufficiently pure that he would not deviate from God's commands willingly. Man in a state of perfection was "sinless" to the extent that he did not engage in willful violations of God's law of love.[22]

---

[21] _A Plain Account of Christian Perfection_, _Works_, Vol. XI, pp. 366-445.

God as Governor

The foregoing has been an attempt to suggest some of the characteristics of God which Wesley associated with God's sovereignty. Some points have simply been introduced, for they relate to other characteristics of God or to the nature of man. It is possible now, however, to turn to God's other role as governor. Of first importance in this role was a further grant of grace by God. This element of God's grace, that which Wesley termed prevenient grace, became for Wesley the foundation of free-will and conscience. Moreover, man's ability to distinguish between good and evil came from this rather special grant from God.

In the idea of God as governor Wesley sought an answer to the problem of freedom. God, in a sense, voluntarily limited himself in his relations with men, for "he created man in his own image: A spirit like himself; a spirit endued with understanding, with will or affections, and liberty."[23] Thus, said Wesley, "all the manifold wisdom of God . . . is displayed in governing man as man."[24] This wisdom of God appeared in his ability to govern man in such a way as to preserve man's understanding, will, and liberty. Without liberty man could not be a moral agent. Without freedom there might be no more vice, but just as surely, there would be no further virtue.

---

[22] Letters, Vol. IV, p. 213 (to Mrs. Maitland, May, 1763).

[23] Works, Vol. VI, p. 318 (Sermon lxvii).

Prevenient Grace. -- As was illustrated previously, Wesley insisted on the absolute sovereignty of God no less vigorously than did the Calvinists. As a major complement to the sovereignty of God, and as the foundation for his belief in God's role as governor, Wesley proposed the concept of prevenient (or preventing) grace. Prevenient grace allowed man freedom. In granting freedom to man God, in a sense, limited himself. Because God was sovereign, only he could make such a grant. In order to maintain a doctrine of freedom, God had to remain somewhat limited. It was in this sense that Wesley maintained that "we cannot impute too much to divine Providence, unless we make it interfere with our free-agency."[25] Wesley thought that even in the natural man, the man "dead to sin," there was the capability of discerning God, and the distinction between good and evil, because God is at work even within the natural man. God has bestowed initially upon all men, freely and without merit, this prevenient grace which creates "within us the power to accept faith or to refuse it."[26] Prevenient grace is distinguished from the grace necessary to salvation given in Jesus Christ, but in minimal terms it does allow man to remain free. There is some confusion as to when men began to share prevenient grace. Implicitly, all men after the fall, partook of it and certainly after the atonement of Christ, and partly as a result of it, all men were granted prevenient grace. It is prevenient grace which is the source of all active responsiveness, "and all good desires spring solely from it."[27] The concept of prevenient grace not only furnished the basis for the idea of freedom, but for conscience, as well.

---

[24] Ibid.

[25] Letters, Vol. VI, p. 263 (to Miss March, April, 1777).

"No man living," said Wesley, "is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience." But conscience is not "natural; it is more properly termed, preventing grace."[28] Wesley gave the following definition of conscience:

> Conscience, then, is that faculty whereby we are at once conscious of our own thoughts, words, and actions; and of their merit or demerit, of their being good or bad; and, consequently, deserving either praise or censure. And some pleasures generally attend the former sentence; some uneasiness the latter: But this varies exceedingly, according to education and a thousand other circumstances.[29]

The fact that man has a conscience comes through God's gift of prevenient grace.[30] It was to conscience that Wesley appealed when it was necessary for him to disregard the discipline of the Church of England from time to time. This emphasis upon conscience was a precursor of the individualism which was to make itself felt in nineteenth and twentieth century liberalism and, as such, has social and political overtones. Though conscience had a place of supreme importance in Wesley's thought, even this must be informed through authority and reason. "For the sake of conscience" was not an argument to be used lightly.[31] In the contest between right and wrong, conscience became the final arbiter of the situation for Wesley. In his appeals to conscience, particularly when such appeals led to a denial of political or ecclesiastical authority, Wesley came close in his thinking to Whigs such as Benjamin Hoadly.[32]

---

[26] Williams, _op_. _cit_., p. 41. [27] Cannon, _op_. _cit_., p. 200.

[28] _Works_, Vol. VI, p. 512 (Sermon lxxxv).

[29] _Ibid_., Vol. VII, p. 187 (Sermon cv).

[30] _Ibid_., p. 189.

Christian Love. -- The culmination of religious experience, thought Wesley, was the development, in the individual, of Christian love. It was possible for man to love, however, because God first loved man. Thus, it was Christian love which God and man shared together. It has already been noted that Wesley thought that the culmination of God working in man would be the perfect possession (and hence use) of love. While love enters as a grant of God's grace, man henceforth has the ability to love independently of God.

---

[31] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 136-137 (Sermon xii).

[32] Norman Sykes, "Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor," *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age*, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1923), pp. 144-146.

The love concept is, therefore, an aspect of both God acting as sovereign and God acting as governor.

Wesley went so far as to define religion in terms of love. Wesley was so convinced of the necessity of love that he remarked that "love [is] to be preferred before truth itself."[33] By this he meant that being able to love is to be preferred above conviction of the truth of any particular doctrine. The law of love which emanates from God was, according to Wesley, a "copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature."[34] As such it prescribes total behavior "with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which He has made."[35] If a man truly loves God he must love the rest of humanity as well. This did not mean just the human race generally, but every single individual.[36] Moreover, this concept of love was to be regarded as dynamic rather than static. One further point needs to be made. Wesley seemed to interpret "love" not only as an emotion in the individual but as a social relationship. Love led, therefore, to certain social consequences. Related to the concept of love was, for example, Wesley's abhorrence of slavery, and the love concept certainly influenced other elements of his political thought (see section on ethics).

---

[33] Works, Vol. V, pp. 5-6 (Sermon i).

[34] Ibid., p. 438 (Sermon xxxiv). [35] Ibid., p. 440.

[36] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 78 (Sermon xciv); Vol. V, pp. 21-22 (Sermon iii).

Wesley's Synergism. -- Finally, God's role as governor presumed that an individual may fall from grace. In other words, grace was resistable. In this position lies the synergistic[37] tendency in Wesleyan thought. In the concept of God's sovereignty Wesley came closest to the Calvinists -- in the concept of God as governor, particularly with regard to the possibility of grace being resistable, Wesley diverged most from the Calvinists. Man, in a very real sense, may choose to un-save himself. The importance of the possibility of the fall from grace is twofold: first, God (in a sense) has formed a limitation on himself. Second, it emphasizes the responsibility of man in the process of salvation. The fact that real moral choices can be made, according to Wesley, gives to man the possibility of real progress impossible in a determined world.[38]

The Theology of Man

In order to understand an individual's political thought (or his theology) it is necessary to ascertain that individual's concept of human nature. The reason for this lies in the fact that the conceptualization of human nature will oftimes determine the nature, extent, and power of the political system in the thought of the individual concerned. In the context of Christian theology human nature must be assessed in terms of man's relationship with God. As a result, what might be considered a question of anthropology in secular thought becomes a matter of theology.

---

[37] This is the semi-Pelagian doctrine that in regeneration there is a cooperation between divine grace and human activity.

[38] Cannon, op. cit., p. 139; Works, Vol. V, pp. 90-97 (Sermon viii); pp. 231-232 (Sermon xix).

There is little doubt that there is the closest relationship between the problem of man's nature and political ideas. Thomas Hobbes, for example, had a pessimistic view of human nature and came to the conclusion that Leviathan was necessary for the preservation of order. Men, left alone, would only create chaos and disorder.[39] In the context of Christian theology, when considering the nature of man, it is mandatory that the problem of evil and the character of sin be considered, for these are inseparably related to man. It may perhaps even be said that the social and political import of a theologically attuned individual or group is determined to a large extent by the concept of sin which is held.[40]

---

[39] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Part I (Chicago: Gateway, 1965), p. 118. See Andrew Hacker, Political Theory (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), p. 206; Howard Becker and Harry Elmer Barnes, Social Thought from Lore to Science (3rd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, 1961), Vol. I, p. 388.

[40] This is substantially the conclusion reached by H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957, first published, 1929), pp. 67-68. Niebuhr unfortunately goes on to suggest that Wesley's definition of sin was so individualistic that it precluded the concept of a positive role for government in the pacification of the individual. As subsequent analysis will demonstrate, this is an over-simplification of Wesley.

The Problem of Evil

A theory of sin and remedies for it arises essentially out of a recognition of the problem of evil. The supposition that evil exists arises out of the fact of human suffering, and a recognition of human suffering leads to the question, "Why?" That Wesley thought evil existed is an indisputable fact. In explicating what he thought to be the major problems of evil, or of human suffering, Wesley came to deny the cosmic optimism of the eighteenth century which suggested that things, "even in their present state, were in perfect order."[41] In 1773 Wesley wrote that "wherever I have been, I have found the bulk of mankind, Christian as well as heathen, deplorably ignorant, vicious, and miserable."[42]

It is instructive to note some of the prevailing conditions which Wesley thought were most illustrative of the fact that evil existed. It is informative for two reasons: first, it expands Wesley's conception of evil; and second, it demonstrates many of Wesley's social and political concerns. Wesley first pointed to the "heathens" of Africa and America and suggested that their conditions of life brought them to a state of savagery. Nor were "civilized" Europeans different, for they too were savage. Both

---

[41] Cannon, op. cit., p. 166. For an expanded analysis of this eighteenth century phenomenon see Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 43-56; Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, first published 1932), pp. 1-32.

[42] Letters, Vol. VI, pp. 61-62 (to Samuel Sparrow, December, 1773).

Catholics and Protestants defied treaties and made war, and war was a most "horrid reproach to the Christian name, yes, to the name of man."[43] From the foregoing Wesley turned to England's class structure as illustrating evil, though it is true that he did not criticize the idea of a class structure. From the horrible living conditions of the peasant and the worker to the predatory character of the upper classes Wesley characterized the evil social conditions of his day.[44]

The Doctrine of Sin

Once it is granted that all is not well with social conditions in the world, the next question is, "Why?" Wesley's answer is that misery is the consequence of sin. This does not mean that God has passed a decree that such and such a person shall suffer, but simply that the social consequences of sin are misery and suffering. Wesley does allow -- as Job did -- that not all suffering is the direct consequence of sin. The point he tries to make, however, is that in normal social intercourse, the commission of sin leads to a consequent suffering. This position, according to

---

[43] Doctrine of Original Sin, According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience, Works, Vol. IX, p. 221.

[44] Ibid., pp. 224-230. See also, Journal, Vol. VIII, p. 105 (October, 1790); Works, Vol. V, pp. 98-99 (Sermon IX), Vol. VI, pp. 55, 57-58 (Sermon xliv), p. 223 (Sermon lvii), pp. 260-265 (Sermon lxi), Vol. VII, p. 340 (Sermon cxxiii).

Wesley, applies equally well to individuals and small groups, to towns, corporations, cities, and kingdoms.[45]

In the eighteenth century there were other answers given to the problem of suffering besides sin. One such answer was that evil and suffering were the result of improper techniques of socialization. This possibility is implicit in Rousseau's ringing introduction to the Social Contract: "Man is born free, but is everywhere in bondage."[46] Wesley himself said that improper socialization "has an amazing force, far beyond what is commonly imagined." For Wesley, however, this did not answer the question, for he in turn asked, "how am I to account for the almost universal prevalence of this bad education [socialization]?"[47] In broad outline, of course, the Wesleyan answer is sin, but this is premised on Wesley's twofold definition of sin.

Wesley seems to have used the word "sin" in a double sense. First, he suggested that it was a characteristic of "man's underlying state of nature prior to conversion,"[48] and, secondly, he believed that after conversion it was a willful denial of God, though the first was still operative and in part accounted for the second. The second idea stemmed from his belief that with conversion man's nature was sufficiently purified to give him a definite power over the impact of the first. Consequently, sin must be the result of a willful violation of divine law. This position is not contradicted by the comment that Wesley made when he said that "no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."[49] Here the grace of which Wesley was speaking was prevenient grace which allows man to recognize the distinction between good and evil. Outside the Christian dispensation, however, Wesley did not think it ultimately possible for goodness to overcome evil. Thus, it would have been possible, at least in principle, for man to find God without the revelation of Jesus Christ, but the fact that man did not turn to God compelled God to reveal himself in that extraordinary manner. The reason why man failed to turn to God was the pervasiveness of evil which was a result of Adam's fall.

---

[45] Original Sin, pp. 237-238.

[46] Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, trans. Willmore Kendall (Chicago: Gateway, 1954), p. 2.

[47] Original Sin, pp. 238-239.

[48] Cannon, op. cit., p. 252.

One exponent of theological liberalism, Walter Rauschenbusch, has suggested that in elaborating the doctrine of the fall Christian theology was attempting "to bring all men under the conviction of sin and condemnation in order that all might realize their need of grace and salvation."[50] Rauschenbusch denies, however, that the doctrine of the fall is necessary. He maintains that it is possible to gain an energetic "consciousness of sin . . . without drawing strength from this doctrine."[51] Rauschenbusch, and other liberals with him, found it necessary to develop a functional (and usually secularized) equivalent of the doctrine. However, the contention of Wesley -- and of orthodox theology -- is that only the doctrine of the fall can account for the pervasiveness of evil in human nature. If sin and evil are only mechanical problems of defective institutions then man should be able to eradicate them. But man had not destroyed sin and evil and in his inability to do so it became necessary for God to reveal himself in Christ. According to Wesley, it is these two elements -- man's inability to cope with evil and God's revelation in Christ -- that demonstrate the truth of the doctrine of the fall. Reinhold Niebuhr suggests that the "genius of Christianity's analysis of evil and sin are to be found in the myth of the Fall."[52]

---

[49] Works, Vol. VI, p. 512 (Sermon lxxxv).

[50] Walter Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d., first published, 1917), pp. 38-39.

Wesley adopted the orthodox position that the state of mankind depended on Adam, and, "by his fall, they all fell into sorrow, and pain, and death, spiritual and temporal."[53] Nor did this derogate from God's justice or goodness for in the second Adam (Christ) God gave man an opportunity to redeem himself. Thus, because man had freedom, man (as exemplified in Adam) was capable of sinning. In essence, it was through man's freedom that sin entered the world (in the second sense above), but as a result of this man's very nature was permanently distorted. It is through God's universal desire that all men be reconciled to himself that man has again the possibility of choosing God. As to those who had never heard of Christ, even though in them goodness could not overcome evil, Wesley did not condemn them to hell. Rather, he suggested that even they (through prevenient grace) could respond to God and that this was, in the final analysis, God's problem.

---

[51] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[52] Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Meridian Books, 1956, first published, 1935), p. 71.

[53] Original Sin, p. 332.

It was the fear of derogating from the "omnipotence and majesty of God [which] has frequently tempted Christian theologians into the error of declaring the Fall preordained in the counsels of God."[54] Such a problem arises, says Niebuhr, when moral realism is unduly emphasized and this in turn sacrificed to the ideas of unity and consistency. Thus, Wesley says in a statement with which Niebuhr would agree, that "Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will, rather than the will of the Creator."[55] Has the history of the human race in the last six thousand years indicated that man was not bedeviled by Adam's sin? Review the history, said Wesley, and ask how else can the universality of evil and suffering be accounted for? As a consequence of the fall man's finiteness became a burden which he must bear. Thus, the body bears against the soul. Body and soul are inseparably entwined, at least in the present life, and in part determine the behavior of each other.[56] The immediate consequence of Adam's denial of God was pain and suffering. Wesley sums up the problem in the following manner:

---

[54] Reinhold Neibuhr, op. cit., p. 73.

[55] Works, Vol. VI, p. 223 (Sermon lvii).

> Why is there pain in the world . . . Because there is sin . . . But why is there sin in the world? Because man was created in the image of God! Because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty . . . And having this power, a power of choosing good or evil, he chose the latter: he chose evil.[57]

Though, for Wesley, Adam was the source of what became man's depravity, he yet refused to say how sin "is transmitted from father to son; I answer plainly, I cannot tell."[58]

It was at the point of freedom and responsibility that Wesley became a staunch opponent of Calvinism and he leveled broadsides against the doctrine of the "horrible decrees." Though the problem of freedom will be discussed further below, it must nevertheless be mentioned here. Wesley opposed the concept of selective salvation so cherished by the Calvinists of his day:

> How is this consistent with either the Divine Justice or Mercy? . . . How is man, if necessarily determined to one way of acting, a free agent? To lie under either a physical or a moral necessity is entirely repugnant to human liberty.[59]

---

[56] Ibid., pp. 219-220.

[57] Ibid., p. 215.

[58] Original Sin, pp. 334-335.

[59] Letters, Vol. I, pp. 22-23 (to his mother, July, 1725).

Wesley opposed the Calvinism of his day with doctrinal views which he labeled Arminianism.[60]

The negative concept of human nature which Wesley held has some similarities, as well as differences, with other political thinkers of his era. One distinct difference between Wesley and many other thinkers of the eighteenth century was the theological basis of his thought. An allusion to Hobbes has already been suggested. Hobbes, a century before Wesley, had propounded, in secular terms, a very negative view of human nature. The result of this was a proposal that a strong government was necessary in order to impede the chaos which resulted from man's character. A similar position, though not nearly so extreme, was evidenced by Wesley in his concern for order and his concept of power. In the eighteenth century Bernard de Mandeville also promoted a negative, but secular concept of human nature.[61] In his Fable of the Bees (1705)

---

[60] After Jacobus Arminius (properly, Jacob Hermensen), 1560-1609, a Dutch theologian. Arminius asserted that God "bestows forgiveness and eternal life on all who repent of their sins and believe in Christ; he wills that all men should attain salvation, and only because he has from eternity foreseen the belief or unbelief of individuals has he from eternity determined the fate of each--thus rejecting the high Calvinistic doctrine of absolute predestination or election. . . . In England Laudians and Latitudinarians were alike Arminian in tendency; Wesleyans and many Baptists and Congregationalists are distinctly anti-Calvinist." Chamber's Biographical Dictionary (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961,1962), p. 52. See also, F. Stuart Chase, "The Theology of Arminius," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review (October, 1960), pp. 248-252. Wesley went beyond Arminius in that he pointed out that God's foreknowledge is a meaningless concept since with the eternal God the time sequence concept of human history is meaningless--God "sees" the whole of eternity (and of Creation) at a glance.

[61] Willey, op. cit., pp. 95-100.

Mandeville argued that private vices made public benefits. He apparently thought that what men should do is to recognize realistically that men tend to be evil, but concluded, unlike Wesley (and Law), that men should also recognize that many of the dynamics of society stemmed from negative instincts. In effect he said that men should thank God for such profitable vices as were available. Opposed to this were the perfectionist ethics of both Wesley and Law which demanded the sublimation of any negative instincts. Further, based upon his ideas of justification and sanctification, Wesley thought that the personality structure of the individual could undergo a radical reorientation which would make such a sublimation possible. In other words, Wesley agreed with Mandeville that man had a basically negative nature, but unlike Mandeville, Wesley thought man could be radically transformed. The judgment of Wesley on Mandeville is expressed in the following:

> Till now I imagined there had never appeared in the world such a book as the works of Machiavel. But Dr. Mandeville goes far beyond it. The Italian only recommended a few vices, as useful to some particular men, and on some particular occasions. But the Englishman loves and cordially recommends vice of every kind; not only as useful now and then, but as absolutely necessary at all times for all communities! Surely Voltaire would hardly have said so much.[62]

Something of the distinction between Wesley and Rousseau has already been alluded to. Rousseau, of course, held that man was naturally good.[63] Before Rousseau, Locke had suggested a theory of human nature in his Essays on Civil Government which promoted the idea of man's natural goodness.[64] If, indeed, Locke did seem to promote the general notion of man's natural goodness in his Essays, he altered his ideas by the time he wrote his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. In the latter work he promotes the psychology of the tabula rasa and this concept would seem to be a middle position, one of neutrality as it were, between a negative and positive view of human nature.[65]

---

[62] Journal, Works, Vol. II, p. 361 (April, 1756).

[63] George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory (3rd ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 583; Donald Atwell Zoll, Reason and Rebellion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,

To such optimistic notions concerning human nature Wesley replied:

> Surely all our declamations on the strength of human reason, and the eminence of our virtues, are no more than the cant and jargon of pride and ignorance, so long as there is such a thing as war in the world.[66]

Eighteenth century thought concerning human nature, then, ran the gamut from an exceedingly pessimistic view of human nature to an

---

1963), pp. 180-188. It must be noted, as Becker and Barnes (I, p. 391) have pointed out, that in some of his later writings Rousseau came to proclaim "the radically evil strain in human nature." The comparison with Wesley comes primarily from The Social Contract in which the more optimistic viewpoint was propounded and which has probably been the most influential of Rousseau's writings.

[64] Becker and Barnes, op. cit., I, pp. 392-393. Locke maintains that in a pre-political state (note, not pre-social) men were free, equal, and independent. This pre-political state was one of liberty, not (as in Hobbes) a state of war. In this sense it may be said that Locke's view of human nature promoted the idea of man's natural goodness. It was not, however, the unequivocal assurance of goodness found in Rousseau's earlier works and especially in The Social Contract.

[65] Sabine, op. cit., p. 526.

[66] Original Sin, p. 223.

exceedingly optimistic conception. It is not too rash to suggest that among the educated classes ideas on this subject tended to be more optimistic than pessimistic. In two ways Wesley represented something of a divergent stream of thought. First, his ideas were theological while most other speculations concerning human nature during the century were secular. Secondly, while holding a radically pessimistic idea of human nature, Wesley nevertheless thought that through justification and sanctification a radical restructuring of that human nature could take place.[67]

For Wesley, then, the loss of the moral image of God, in the fall, meant that depravity in man is total. Rather than living in joyful obedience to God, man is now the "proud guide of his own actions. Original sin is rebellion against God resulting in pride and self-idolatry."[68] The doctrine of original sin itself is humbling to man, more so than its "opposite; and I know not what honour we can pay to God if we think man came out of His hands in the condition wherein he is now." Further, as indicated above, Wesley declared that it is impossible to account for the present state of man by any other concept than "upon the supposition of original sin."[69]

---

[67] An excellent discussion concerning the varying notions of human nature in the eighteenth century may be found in Becker and Barnes, op. cit., II, pp. 423-454.

[68] Williams, op. cit., p. 50.

[69] Letters, Vol. V, p. 327 (to Samuel Sparrow, July, 1772). See also the following: Ibid., p. 231 (to John Fletcher, March, 1771); Williams, op. cit., pp. 49-50; Reinhold Neibuhr, op. cit., pp. 74-75; Rauschenbusch, op. cit., p. 47; Georgia Harkness, Understanding the Christian Faith (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1948), pp. 102-103.

Freedom

Related to much of what has been said previously is the problem of freedom. For Wesley liberty, in the sense of free will, was necessary in order for man to have any moral responsibility. God's sovereignty on the one hand and man's depravity on the other raised crucial questions regarding man's ability to be free. There were three ways, said Wesley, by which God might have hindered man's liberty: 1) by not creating any being free; 2) by constraining man to choose right; and 3) by placing man in a situation in which temptation does not exist. But God chose to give man freedom and "without a possibility of choosing wrong, there can be no freedom."[70] In the doctrine of prevenient grace (see above) Wesley found the concept necessary to undergird his belief in liberty.

In his concept of the universalism of God's grace Wesley contested the Calvinist concept of selective and determined salvation, while in the concept of prevenient grace Wesley saw man's ability to cooperate with God and to distinguish right from wrong. Prevenient grace differed from, but was related to, saving grace granted in Christ. In advocating that God had incarnated himself in Jesus Christ to save man, all men, Wesley was advocating a proposition "that made salvation available to all men and not simply to an elect few. Christ died for all men and any man is free to accept this salvation."[71]

---

[70] *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 72 (to his Father, January, 1731).

With regard to man's depravity a problem also arises: the possibility of divesting man of responsibility. Certainly there inheres a logical difficulty at this point. It is interesting to note that both Wesley and Neibuhr avoid this logical pitfall in a similar manner. Niebuhr suggests that man's depravity is not quite total. Human reason (which produces freedom by its transcendence over impulse) makes sin, and therefore responsibility, possible.[72] Wesley on the other hand, maintains the doctrine of total depravity, but poses a complementary doctrine, that of prevenient grace. It is prevenient grace which is the source of all active responsiveness.[73] Both Wesley and Niebuhr provide a means by which man retains his freedom, hence, his responsibility. The means, in both cases, is God-given -- reason for Niebuhr, prevenient grace for Wesley. These two concepts are functionally identical, and the primary difference is Wesley's belief that prevenient grace cannot be said to be "natural," for it is an extra gift of God, not an intrinsic part of man's nature, even though all men have it and have it automatically and equally. Niebuhr, differing from Wesley, says that reason is a "natural" attribute of man's nature which was assigned by God to man in the creation. Man, in the final analysis, must preserve this ability for free choice. Thus, Wesley answered his three suggestions as to how God might have hindered freedom as follows: 1) God "created" man free in the sense of endowing him with prevenient grace;[74] 2) in prevenient grace God allows man to make the distinction and the choice between good and evil; and 3) God allows man's social condition to be largely of man's own making thus embodying both good and evil (temptation).

---

[71] William T. Watkins, "Wesley's Message to his own Age," in Methodism, op. cit., p. 22. See also, John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (3rd ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 33; Cannon, op. cit., p. 247. See, in addition, Works, Vol. VII, p. 7 (Sermon i). It should be noted that the doctrine of election, which Wesley rejected, is an aristocratic or elitist and fundamentally undemocratic doctrine. This was borne out in the organization of the New England theocracy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Letters and the Journal abound in further elaboration of the problems inhering within Calvinism and the efficacy of the doctrine of free grace and free will. For further discussion, however, see Predestination Calmly Considered, Works, Vol. X, pp. 204-258; A Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend, Works, Vol. X, pp. 259-265; and The Question: "What is an Arminian?" Answered. By a lover of Free Grace, Works, Vol. X, pp. 358-360.

[72] Reinhold Niebuhr, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

[73] Cannon, op. cit., p. 107.

Conscience

Related to the idea of freedom through prevenient grace is the notion of conscience. The suggestion has already been put forth that man's conscience is a function of prevenient grace. Although conscience itself comes from God, the effect that it can have on any given individual is influenced by social and psychological factors.[75] Notwithstanding the myriad of things which may affect conscience, however, it is not "now natural to man."[76] Conscience is the sense of right and wrong in the political and social order (the public sense) on the one hand and in the individual (the moral sense) on the other. This distinction between the "public sense" and the "moral sense" was appropriated from Francis Hutcheson.[77] The former produces pain at the misery of others and pleasure in their release from misery. The latter produces approval of benevolence and disapproval of cruelty in acts emanating from the self.[78] Both of these ideas, said Wesley, were incorporated into the concept of conscience.

---

[74] The discrepancy here in the use of "created" should be noted. This is a result of Wesley's not always consistent use of terminology. The interpretation given, is, however, the one which most closely corresponds to most of what he has to say on the subject.

Wesley thought that for conscience sake men were responsible for seeking the happiness ("I now speak only with regard to the present world") of their fellows.[79] Conscience always was to be the final resort in the contest between private moral predilections and public (ecclesiastical or political) authority. Earlier in the eighteenth century the Whig Bishop Benjamin Hoadly had put forth an unequivocal concept of conscience and private judgment. Hoadly, even though a bishop of the established church, attacked the ecclesiastical authority. Somewhat at odds with his own doctrine of private judgment with regard to dogma, Hoadly upheld the authority of the state, particularly over the church.

---

[75] Supra., this chapter, p. 33.

[76] Works, Vol. VII, p. 189 (Sermon cv).

[77] Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), a Scottish philosopher and professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow. Hutcheson's ethical system is a development of Shaftesbury's "moral sense" ethics, in which moral distinctions are in a sense intuited, rather than arrived at by reasoning. See Chamber's Biographical Dictionary, op. cit, p. 677. It was his Essay on the Passions (1728) in which Hutcheson made the above distinctions and to which Wesley referred.

[78] Works, Vol. VII, p. 189.

[79] An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 7.

In the so-called Bangorian Controversy which ensued, the most able respondent was William Law. Law contended that Hoadly's unlimited appeal to private judgment would undercut all authority, whether political or ecclesiastical. Furthermore, Hoadly had made much of sincerity of the individual, but Law pointed out that a man could be wrong and sincere at the same time. Law finally came out in favor of the Non-Juring position of an equal and independent civil and ecclesiastical authority.[80] Wesley was unwilling to carry the argument for conscience as far as Hoadly. Particularly he diverged from Hoadly in not holding to the primary authority of the state. Somewhat more consistently than Hoadly Wesley applied the rule of conscience to both ecclesiastical and political society. Itwas at this point, however, that he diverged also from Law, for Wesley was unwilling to entertain the notion of authority unfettered by private judgment. Thus Wesley stands in a middle ground between Hoadly and Law, though probably closer to Hoadly than to Law on this point.

---

[80] Sykes, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

Man's Social Nature

Before turning to the problem of man in an ethical context one further aspect of human nature needs consideration. For Wesley, was man's nature primarily sociable or individualistic? In the answer to this question lie fundamental characteristics not only of man but also of man's society, whether political or ecclesiastical. Wesley apparently thought that God had created man with a social need. Furthermore, Wesley thought that an individual was not really fully human except in the social context.[81] This was true, said Wesley, not only because of the protection needed by a child, but also because an individual was what he was largely through education or socialization.[82] Moreover, with regard to Christianity itself, Wesley was of the belief that an individual as such could not be a Christian. "Christianity," said Wesley, "is essentially a social religion. . . . To turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it."[83] The foregoing quotation exemplifies Wesley's feeling that even in religion much knowledge of God comes through social relationships. Somewhat inconsistently with his concept of grace Wesley maintained the Lockean psychology of the _tabula_ _rasa_. It should be pointed out, however, that Wesley regarded faith as somewhat analogous to the perceptive faculties of the eyes, ears, and nose. Unlike Rousseau, Wesley rejected the notion that in society men had artificially banded together and unlike Locke he rejected the political (civil or ecclesiastical) contract. Rather, he accepted the Aristotelian notion of the sociability of man. Society, therefore, for Wesley, did not constitute a separate order of being but extended from God's creative act on the one hand and man's very nature on the other. Government became simply a natural outgrowth of man's sociability.

---

[81] _Works_, Vol. VI, p. 59 (Sermon xliv).

[82] _Ibid_., Vol. VII, p. 231 (Sermon cx).

[83] _Ibid_., Vol. V, p. 296 (Sermon xxiv).

Ethics

Of all the animals in God's creations, only man is a moral creature. Man is a moral being because of his ability to distinguish between good and evil. The necessity for making ethical judgments, that is, establishing a distinction between good and evil (and the further distinction between value and obligation), arose, for Wesley, out of an acute appreciation of the problems inhering in human existence. Wesley looked around him and saw that eighteenth century society was fraught with all kinds of contradictions between human welfare and human behavior. In suggesting that the essence of the Christian religion was the general principle of love, Wesley developed a basis for normative values to guide behavior. Love was not natural to man but appropriated by man as a result of God first loving man.[84] God should, in turn, become the first object of man's love.[85] Wesley's ethic of love was both personal and social. It was personal in the sense that love was (in part) an emotion in the individual and manifested itself in personal behavior. It was social, however, in the sense that love was also thought of as a relationship among people and that the manifestation of love should be, primarily, social service. Such service was a manifestation of a "love of our neighbour, as can only spring from the love of God."[86]

---

[84] *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 59 (Sermon xliv); *Selections from John Wesley's 'Notes on the New Testament,'* p. 128, note on 1 John 4:19.

[85] *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 47 (Sermon xci).

Wesley treated the problem of social ethics most systematically in a series of ten sermons on the Sermon on the Mount. In these sermons it is apparent that he was "convinced that those virtues which characterize Christianity most truly are found in social relationships, and not in solitary religion."[87] Wesley's views concerning the Beatitudes in particular form the basis for his concept of righteousness which is at the root of his ethic. The Beatitudes become, for Wesley, the goals by which the love concept is structured and informed.[88]

How are the high goals set forth in the Beatitudes to be fulfilled? Wesley thought that truly good works can come only after commitment to God. That true righteousness is incumbent upon Christian conversion Wesley takes as axiomatic. The world sometimes views the high ideals of the Beatitudes as foolishness, but the Christian holds these as the goals in his life and in the collective life of man. After all is said and done, said Wesley, the Christian is in the best position to determine the needs of men because he sees most clearly the evil that besets man. It is no wonder, commented Wesley, that the world, which knows not God, moves along in happy ignorance and that the world should regard the Christian as foolish.[89] In order to remedy the problems of evil God works in the world through man to help him see the vision of the possibility of holiness.[90] Without holiness, no man shall see God, nor will there be justice on earth without it. Wesley does not, however, condemn people who have been subjected to adverse conditions of socialization or who have not been acquainted with the Christian revelation -- these are God's problems and he alone can solve them.[91]

---

[86] Ibid.

[87] Kathleen Walker MacArthur, The Economic Ethics of John Wesley (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936), pp. 92-93.

[88] See the following: Works, Vol. V, pp. 247ff. (Sermon xxi); pp. 262ff. (Sermon xxii); pp. 278ff. (Sermon xxiii); pp. 249ff. (Sermon xxiv); pp. 310ff. (Sermon xxv); pp. 327ff. (Sermon xxvi); pp. 344ff. (Sermon xxvii); pp. 361ff. (Sermon xxviii); pp. 378ff. (Sermon xxix); pp. 393ff. (Sermon xxx); pp. 405ff. (Sermon xxxi); pp. 413ff. (Sermon xxxii); pp. 423ff. (Sermon xxxiii); John Wesley, Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament (London: The Epworth Press, 1958, first published, 1754), pp. 28-40.

---

[89] Works, Vol. V, p. 261 (Sermon xxii).

[90] Letters, Vol. IV, p. 63 (to Sir James Lowther, May, 1759).

[91] Works, Vol. VII, p. 47-48 (Sermon xcl); Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 347 (Sermon lxix). The problem arises that if holiness is necessary for salvation both in history and beyond history, what of those who have never known the name of Christ, since for Wesley, true holiness could come only with the acceptance of the Christian revelation? Why is it, Wesley asks, that so many men seem so cut off from the possibility of holiness? Some in the eighteenth century would answer that such people as Africans, or aborigines, or almost any "less fortunate" peoples were atoning for some particular sin, committed perhaps, in a pre-existent state. Wesley dismissed

In order to be holy, Wesley thought, men must act with heavenly goals in mind and with godly means. This did not mean, however, that men should break off commerce with the world. In fact, without such intercourse, "according to his [Jesus] account of Christianity, we cannot be Christians at all."[92] Wesley thought that the ethics of the Beatitudes demanded a dynamic relationship with the world and its problems. Ethics for Wesley may be summed up as follows: "Christianity, as it includes the whole moral law of God . . . is designed of God to be the last of all his dispensations."[93] There were, however, enemies to the "law" of God. Included were those who willfully chose sin and corruption; those who thought that conventional morality (i.e., harmlessness, paying bills on time, etc.) was the totality of the moral imperative of Christianity; and, above all, those who explicitly denied the law of love.[94] In fact, those that accepted only conventional morality by omission practiced injustice.[95] Wesley was saying here that there is no such thing as moral indifference -- there was for him an over-riding responsibility on the part of everyone for the sins of the world. Righteousness which is really relevant can come only from commitment to God and an acceptance of the moral demands which God makes. Social and political regeneration can come only

---

this "logic" as foolishness. His answer to all this was that it was hardly right to blame someone who had been subjected to adverse processess of socialization and as a result had no chance for a better life.

[92] Ibid., p. 299 (Sermon xxiv). [93] Ibid., p. 314 (Sermon xxv).

[94] Ibid., pp. 316-317. [95] Ibid., p. 322.

from men who are themselves regenerated in the image of Christ.

What, then, is the basic "Christian" response to the political system? The most concise statement of this is found in Wesley's commentary on the thirteenth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. St. Paul begins that chapter by writing:

> Let every soul be subject to the supreme powers, for there is no power but from God; the powers that be are appointed by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the appointment of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation.[96]

Wesley commented that "power" here signifies the "supreme authority; powers are they who are invested with it [supreme authority]." In addition, such supreme authority is "from God, who constituted all in general, and permits each in particular by His providence." Not only this, but those who act in a manner contrary to the laws of the community shall receive condemnation not "only from the magistrate, but from God also."[97] St. Paul maintains that "rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil. . . . Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake."[98] Wesley accepted this formulation, but with limitations, for he said that St. Paul meant rulers "in general, notwithstanding some particular exceptions," and that obedience should come out of conscience' sake, that is, "out of obedience to God."[99] Such is Wesley's general conception of what the individual response to the state should be. This fits in with the reverence Wesley had for the state and for monarchy and the Revolution Settlement in England.

---

[96] Romans 13:1-2.

[97] Explanatory Notes, pp. 571-572.

[98] Romans 13:3-5.

[99] Explanatory Notes, p. 572.

Even though Wesley had a great reverence for the state, he could still be critical of individual monarchs and of political policy. This was born of the notion of righteousness which he held.[100] Wesley has been criticized for seeing monarchs such as Charles II and Frederick the Great only in moral terms, though in Wesley's thought these were the properly relevant terms.[101] For Wesley a monarch was good when he refrained from obviously negative acts (i.e., war, except in defense; persecution; etc.), and performed positive acts of good for his people. War and persecution were the embodiment of human evil in the most pervasive form.[102]

Related to the whole problem of political and social ethics is the concept of social justice. For Wesley social justice was a function of the love relationship. Under a regime of a totally just society, love and mercy would rule the world. Such a society would be the complete opposite of the society constructed on the basis of depraved men (where war, exploitation, and other injustices prevail).[103] Wesley clearly saw both ends of the spectrum of justice based on love. In the middle area he suggested that the state had a divine function to preserve order but that even here the love concept should prevail as much as was possible. He also maintained that those who were concerned with social reform could maximize their efforts only by acting with love. Only in this manner, Wesley thought, can the intentions of reformers "be fixed on the glory of God and [the] good of man."[104] It was in this middle area, however, that Wesley's "concerns were inadequately related to his doctrine of holiness."[105] In seeking to evaluate the place of Wesleyan social ethics H. Richard Niebuhr claims that Wesley downgraded justice because (for Wesley) any movement of social service and equity were "concessions made out of love rather than . . . demands of justice."[106] Contrary to Niebuhr's interpretation, the evidence seems to indicate that Wesley was concerned with the justice inherent in social problems because an unjust circumstance constituted a denial of the love relationship and it was the love relation which made justice possible.[107]

---

[100] Maldwyn Edwards, John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 40.

[101] Ibid., p. 41. [102] Ibid., p. 45.

[103] Works, Vol. V, p. 46 (Sermon iv).

In applying the concept of Christian perfection to the relationship of the individual to society Wesley insisted on the inseparable connection between the love of God and the love of man. Holiness was achieved when the Christian "loves every soul that God has made; every child of man, of whatever place or nation."[108] With reference to the central emphasis which Wesley placed on the doctrine of perfection (the perfect possession of the perfect motive) G. C. Cell suggested that in Wesley's theology there is a "necessary synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace with the [Roman] Catholic ethic of holiness."[109] Following Cell's position John L. Peters adds that "while the Catholic tradition indicated the goal, the Protestant emphasis provided the dynamic."[110] The evidence seems to substantiate this interpretation.

---

[104] _Ibid_., Vol. VI, p. 162 (Sermon lii).

[105] Williams, _op_. _cit_., pp. 189-190.

[106] H. Richard Niebuhr, _op_. _cit_., p. 69.

[107] _Infra_., Chap. III, sec. on "Justice"; and Chap. IV, sec. on "Justice."

---

[108] Letters, Vol. II, p. 376 (to Dr. Conyers Middleton, January, 1749).

[109] G. C. Cell, The Rediscovery of Wesley (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935), p. 361.

[110] John Leland Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 21. Williams, op. cit., p. 175, denies this position with the comment that "if it is true that Wesley accepted the Catholic ethic of holiness, it must also be true that he accepted the Catholic and abandoned the Protestant view of grace." Williams bases this judgment upon his interpretation of the Catholic view of grace enabling man to rise the ladder of merit ultimately to be saved by works, whereas the Protestant view holds that man is saved and sanctified by grace through faith alone. On the other hand, Roman Catholic John Todd, John Wesley and the Catholic Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), pp. 76-77, 145-146, seems to think Wesley's view of perfection not foreign to that of Roman Catholicism and this leads to the suspicion that perhaps Williams has over-emphasized the Roman concept of merit and under-emphasized Wesley's insistence on the works that flow from faith. See also, Lycugus M. Starkey, Jr., The Work of the Holy Spirit, A Study in Wesleyan Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 60.

Conclusion

With respect to the nature of God Wesley made the distinction between God as "Creator" or "Sovereign" and God as "Governor." As sovereign God grants his grace and the grant of grace is responsible for all that is in the sense of creation on the one hand and the continuing work of God for and in man on the other. All that is created (both physical and social nature) derives from God in his role as sovereign, as does the possibility of salvation itself. In his role as governor God grants to man the possibility of freedom. This, in effect, is a self-limitation on God. Likewise, the character of religion itself (conceived as love) arises from this attribute of God. The notion of Christian perfection can be thought of as a portion of both attributes of God's nature.

The notion of man which Wesley developed determined to a large extent the role he thought man may play in conducting his own affairs. Moreover, man's nature helped control the purposes of the political system and the manner in which that system may operate. In Christian thought, closely related to the problem of man's nature, and not actually capable of abstraction from it, is the problem of evil and the character of sin. The evils from which man was to be saved were largely of a social nature for Wesley (war, exploitation, etc.). Such evils were a result of sin. Sin existed for Wesley in a twofold sense: as the basic corruption of human nature, and as the willful denial of God's law of love. Sin in both senses entered the world because Adam was free to deny God. God himself endowed man with freedom through prevenient grace. If sin entered the world through man's freedom it must also be noted that man had the capability to be righteous as a result of his freedom.

In fact, man, working with God, could be potentially perfect in the sense that his motives could become pure. The Christian's response to the political system was to be, in part, an ethical one premised upon the notion that God ordained the powers that be.

The twofold distinction between God and man was the essential distinction in Wesley's theology. There are other approaches, of course, Eric Voegelin, for example, contends that there is a fourfold order of being: man, society, the world, and God. Voegelin's statement has some similarity to the set of ideas which Arthur Lovejoy analyzes in his book, The Great Chain of Being.[111] The notion of the Great Chain of Being was prominent during the eighteenth century and Wesley actually used the term once, though the concept was not influential in his thinking. The twofold dichotomy between God and man is much more important and the concept of "society" and "the world" can be subsumed under the attributes Wesley thought God and man possessed. Society, on the one hand, was a by-product of God's creation of man and man had "naturally" sociable characteristics. At least this was true of civil society. Ecclesiastical society was an additional and special grant by God to man through revelation (Adam, Moses, Jesus). The "world," on the other hand, was a part of God's creation in his role as sovereign. Thus, for Wesley, "society" and "the world" were not separate orders of being, but were by-products of the attributes of God and/or man.

---

[111] Eric Voegelin, Order and History, Vol. I, Israel and Revelation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), pp. 1-10; Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 183-226.

CHAPTER III

ELEMENTS OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS CONCEPT OF GOD

The most important distinction Wesley made with respect to God was his idea that God played two very distinct roles: that of sovereign and that of governor. With regard to the former, God's free grant of grace to man and the creation itself is of the utmost significance. The latter takes on importance with respect to the limitations God imposes upon himself. There is some overlapping, of course. An example of this is the idea of freedom. Man is morally free because of God's grant of prevenient grace, but God limits himself in allowing man to make choices based upon the ability to distinguish between good and evil. This chapter will deal with various aspects of Wesley's political thought related to one or both of his two concepts of God.

Power and Authority

The Problem of Authority

Among the problems which must be analyzed in the light of Wesley's concept of God is the idea of political power and the related concept of authority. The question of the precise relationship between power and authority is one of the long-standing problems of political theory. Several contemporary theorists suggest that authority is a type of social or political power. In order to designate "authority" they use the term "power" with such qualifying adjectives as "formal," "traditional," or "legitimate."[1] Other theorists, such as Carl J. Friedrich, dissent from this position. Friedrich contends that authority is not simply a kind of power, but rather one source of power. He suggests that authority is the "potentiality of reasoned elaboration" of a communication.[2] By this Friedrich means that it must be possible to explain or "rationalize" the contents of a communication to the satisfaction of its recipients. Without the possibility of reasoned elaboration the directive would not be regarded as authoritative. Thus, authority, says Friedrich, can exist without power, and power without authority. Like Friedrich, R. M. MacIver implies that authority differs from power. He says that the meaning of authority is embodied in the established "right" within a social order to exercise power.[3] The content of authority differs in these two cases, but the similarity indicated above does exist.

In the seventeenth century Locke maintained that authority was consent. No use of power was authoritative without consent.[4] Thus, for Locke, as for Friedrich, authority differs distinctly from power. David Easton, echoing Locke, describes authority in terms of acceptance. Although such acceptance may arise from various sources -- moral, traditional, customary, or purely from fear of consequences -- Easton contends that power or policy is authoritative only "when the people to whom it is intended to apply or who are affected by it consider that they must or ought to obey it."[5] In other words, authority is conferred by people consenting (regardless of the origin of consent) to an act. Easton, therefore, perhaps not as clearly as Friedrich, implies that authority is something different from power. All theorists agree that authority is important. As Lasswell and Kaplan point out, "every power group seeks to acquire authority or to exercise effective power over authorities."[6]

---

[1] Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 133; Bertrand Russell, Power: A New Social Analysis (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962), pp. 27ff.; Richard A. Schermerhorn, Society and Power (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 35-39.

[2] Carl J. Friedrich (ed.), Authority (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 35.

[3] R. M. MacIver, The Web of Government (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947), p. 83.

The Concept of Power

Power, as opposed to authority, is commonly defined in terms of the capacity to make decisions which affect the behavior of another party. According to Lasswell and Kaplan power is "a process in time, constituted by experientially localized and observable acts."[7] They refine this position when they suggest that power becomes the participation in the making of decisions: "G has power over H with respect to the values K if G participates in the making of decisions affecting the K-policies of H."[8] Recent literature has attempted to distinguish between influence and power, but since this was not a concern of Wesley's it is not necessary to review this problem. Lasswell and Kaplan contend that their definition of power is similar to that of Locke, although, as will become apparent, this is a mistaken belief. Locke maintained that political power was the right to make laws with the death penalty, and, as a result, all lesser penalties. The purpose of power, which was an explicit element of Locke's definition, was to defend the public good.[9] In this "definition" of power Locke confused the distinction between power and authority.

---

[4] John Locke, Of Civil Government--Second Treatise (Chicago: Gateway, 1955), pp. 68-70.

[5] David Easton, The Political System (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 132. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 316, relates authority to decisions which are "voluntarily" accepted. On the surface this appears to be similar to Locke and Easton, but the further contention by Mills that authority is power (rather than being distinct from power) belies this interpretation. For Mills authority is voluntarily obeyed power and this definition places him closer to Lasswell or Russell.

[6] Lasswell and Kaplan, op. cit., p. 137.

Wesley on Power

Wesley's thought concerning power can be divided, as in the foregoing discussion, between the concept of power as such, and the concept of authority. Wesley defined power as the ability to decree the continuance of life and the further ability to take life away. As a result of these abilities the possessor of power had the capacity to determine attributes of liberty and property and "all things of an inferior nature."[10] Ostensibly, at least, Wesley seems to place himself among those who would deal with power descriptively rather than normatively. Locke's statement defining political power was normative rather than descriptive for his emphasis was on the "right" of making laws. Furthermore, Locke's formulation was teleological because his definition of power included a statement of purposes for which power was to be used. Since the foregoing is true, Lasswell and Kaplan are not entirely correct in describing themselves as in essential agreement with Locke. Lasswell and Kaplan have, of course, attempted a descriptive interpretation of power. It may be concluded, therefore, that since Wesley's definition of power was descriptive in form (with no normative prescriptions or proscriptions), he at least shares some notions with modern analysts.[11]

---

[7] Ibid., p. xiv. [8] Ibid., p. 75.

[9] Locke, op. cit., p. 3.

---

[10] Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power, Works, Vol. XI, p. 46. It is interesting to compare Wesley's concept of power with Robert Dahl's notion of "coercive influence." Dahl defines this as "influence based on the threat or expectation of extremely severe penalties or great losses, particularly physical punishment, torture, imprisonment, and death." Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 50. Dahl goes on to say that this notion of coercive influence is what others define as power.

[11] This is not to say that modern political analysts are interested solely in a description of the social or political phenomenon of power. Rather, as with Lasswell and Kaplan, there is generally an effort to be more precise in describing power as a phenomenon.

Wesley on Authority

It is when Wesley's ideas concerning authority are analyzed that it is possible to see a divergence not only from much of modern political analysis but also from the Lockean tradition. The most important question for Wesley was: by what authority is power utilized? This interest arose out of his desire to link God with the political order. Wesley argued that the state had the power of capital punishment which it exercised authoritatively. Since authoritative power can come only from God, then it must receive this power from God for only God is capable of giving the right of capital punishment. God's role as creator and sovereign provided the sole ability to confer authority on others for the execution of the death penalty. No man, only God, "can give the power of the sword, [or] any such power as implies a right to take away life."[12] The logic behind this position is circuitous for Wesley seems to say that because the state can take life away authoritatively it must have authority from God because it is obvious that it has the authority to take life away. In other words, Wesley attempts a demonstration of authority which begins and ends with the same phenomenon.

As has been suggested previously, Wesley was convinced that authority came "from God, who constituted all in general, and permits each in particular by His providence."[13] It is clear, however, that Wesley thought that God conferred authority on a wide variety of governments. The precise form of government, therefore, was irrelevant. The point that Wesley was most concerned with making, however, was that there "is no subordinate power in any nation, but what is derived from the supreme power therein."[14] It is interesting to compare Wesley with some related notions of Jacques Maritain. Both Wesley and Maritain are concerned with the problem of God's sovereignty. Maritain contends that because God is sovereign, and because sovereignty is indivisible, there is no such thing as political sovereignty.[15] Moreover, according to him, power comes from God through the people to the government. Wesley and Maritain differ not in terms of God's sovereignty, but in terms of God's ability to confer sovereignty on government. In Wesley's thought the conferral of sovereignty is synonomous with the conferral of authority. Wesley said that God, in effect, through the conferral of authority, allowed government to be sovereign. The two are similar in the view that only God can confer authority, no matter what its restrictions or its organization.

---

[12] Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power, Works, Vol. XI, p. 52. On this aspect of Wesley's thought see also his sermon, "The Great Assize," Works, Vol. V, p. 182 (Sermon xv); and Kathleen Walker MacArthur, The Economic Ethics of John Wesley (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 27.

In suggesting that the source of power and authority derives from God, Wesley seems to be closer to Filmer, Locke's old opponent, than to Locke himself. Such a similarity is more apparent than real, however, for Filmer in his Patriarcha not only put forward the notion of the divine source of power but attempted also to demonstrate that the only proper form of government was monarchy.[16] As was pointed out above, Wesley held that God could confer authority on government regardless of its form. Moreover, according to Wesley, God had in fact given authority to a variety of governmental forms. In Patriarcha Filmer attempted to show that monarchy grew out of the patriarchal family structure, and since the patriarchal system was the first "political" system known to exist -- presumably from the time of Adam -- then God must have meant for the patriarchal system to be the only system of organization. Since monarchy is the natural development of such a family structure, then monarchy is the only form of government God would dare ratify -- or so Filmer seems to say. In essence, then, Filmer's treatise was basically a defense of monarchy while Wesley, like Jacques Maritain, was concerned with the defense of God's sovereignty.

---

[13] Explanatory Notes, pp. 571-572, note on Romans 8:1.

[14] Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power, Works, pp. 47-48.

[15] Jacques Maritain, Man and the State (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 49-50.

Power and Authority: Summary

Because Wesley's concern was with God's sovereignty, he not only differed from Filmer but from Locke as well. Locke, in maintaining the idea of consent, was quite incompatible with Wesley.

---

[16] Robert Filmer, Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings [1680] (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1947), bound with Locke's Essay on Government, pp. 254-260.

Moreover, in promoting the theory of consent Locke was apparently attempting to secure property rights. Thus, not only did Wesley and Locke differ concerning the source of authority, but the fundamental objectives of their speculations differed as well. Unlike Locke, too, Wesley made a rather clear distinction between authority and power. Locke's initial definition of power confused the relationship between power and authority. In his discussion of consent, however, it becomes clear that Locke equated it with authority. In so doing he made authority an entity distinct from power and in this distinction Locke and Wesley were similar. In ascribing God as the source of authority Wesley seems to suggest that it might be possible for a government to have authority, but not have power. Certainly the reverse is true. In analyzing power and authority as separate phenomena both Locke and Wesley appear close to such analysts as Friedrich, MacIver, and Easton. For the same reason both Wesley and Locke differ from Lasswell and Kaplan who regard authority as simply a form of power.

In general, Wesley's concept of authority was more akin to Tory thinking than to Whig. The typical Whig position was based upon the Lockean precepts of contract and consent rather than upon God. Benjamin Hoadly exemplified this tradition in the eighteenth century.[17] The Tory conception of authority was based upon theological premises similar to those of Wesley and was illustrated in writers such as Swift and Johnson.[18] Differences between Wesley's thought and typical Tory thinking occur, however. In particular the democratic temper of other elements of Wesley's theology tended to downgrade the Tory elements in his concept of authority.

---

[17] F. J. C. Hearnshaw (ed.), The Social and Political Ideas of some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1923), pp. 131-137.

Natural Rights and Natural Law

A second major problem which relates to Wesley's conception of God is that of natural rights and natural law. This is related to Wesley's idea that there was no natural religion.[19] "Religion," "rights," and "law" -- if there were any universal attributes to any of these at all -- were known to man only through God's revelation, and this was an act of his sovereignty. There could be, therefore, no natural religion, law, or rights in the Lockean sense.

Wesley's Doubts

Wesley's objection to natural law and natural rights arose from two different and somewhat contradictory propositions which he accepted. First, because of God's sovereignty, man could not and did not have anything naturally.[20] Everything, Wesley thought, was in some sense a grant from God because of his creative act. Especially this was true of such things as freedom of the will, the governing law of love, and other "universal" attributes of man which were given as special dispensations of God through revelation. These were not knowable through an exercise of reason -- they were known only through faith. Second, Wesley (somewhat uncritically) accepted the Lockean-based empiricism of his day and thus the Lockean psychology of the *tabula rasa*: "all our knowledge which we naturally have is originally derived from our senses."[21] Indeed, he went the whole way with the empiricists and claimed that there were no innate concepts at all. Wesley, quite inconsistently, even went so far at one point as to claim that since all things were learned, even sin and evil, it followed that man's nature could be cleansed through the proper education.[22]

---

[18] Jeffrey Hart (ed.), Political Writers of Eighteenth Century England (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 10.

[19] Works, Vol. VI, p. 59 (Sermon xliv).

[20] It should be recalled that Wesley did believe that God created man as a naturally social being. This "natural" sociability, however, resulted from biological and psychological needs of men in terms of self-preservation and the acquisition of knowledge. As such, it is possible to say that Wesley thought that man's sociability was empirically verifiable while natural rights and natural law were

Natural law may be said to be the following: it is a law which would be binding upon human societies in the absence of institutional law or which is binding as supplementing institutional law. The conception of natural law originated with the Stoics, by whom

---

not. In other words, for Wesley man's sociability was a completely different kind of phenomenon from natural rights. Thus, God could create man with a social "nature" but quite consistently not endow him with natural rights.

[21] *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 90 (Sermon xcv). In an even more explicit manner Wesley remarked (in *Remarks upon Mr. Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," Works*, Vol. XIII, p. 455) that "I think the point, 'that we have no innate principles' is abundantly proved [by Locke], and cleared from all objects that have any shadow of strength."

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 231 (Sermon cx).

it was regarded as embodying those rules of justice discernible by right reason. This view was taken over by Roman jurists, who sometimes identified natural law with the _ius gentium_. Justinian adopted Ulpian's definition of it as that law which nature has taught all living beings. The scholastics generally regarded natural law as that part of the divine or eternal law which is not directly revealed, but is discernible by reason. Many writers of the eighteenth century derived a corollary doctrine of natural rights which they regarded as having prior validity to institutional law.[23] Natural rights, too, were known through reason. All of the foregoing Wesley rejected for he thought that reason worked only on the data it received through sense perception. For Wesley reason was not something mystical but rather the logical process by which the mind ordered the data of sense perception.[24] He did believe that there was a universal moral law which men could know and adhere to, but such moral law was known only through revelation and then only by faith. Any universal moral law was universal only because God willed it to be so, thus making it an exercise of God's sovereign powers.[25]

---

[23] W. Friedmann, _Legal Theory_ (Toronto: The Carswell Co., Ltd., 1960), pp. 43-47 (statement of the problem), pp. 47-53 (ancient theories), pp. 53-64 (the Middle Ages), pp. 64-82 (subsequent development through the eighteenth century); Edwin W. Patterson, _Jurisprudence_ (Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1953), pp. 332-375; William Seal Carpenter, _Foundations of Modern Jurisprudence_ (New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), pp. 52-73; and George H. Sabine, _A History of Political Theory_ (Rev. ed.; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955), pp. 164-165, 180-181, 202, 255, 422-429, 455-456, 459-461, 465-467, 526-528, 582-585, 601-604.

[24] _A Compendium of Logic_, _Works_, Vol. XIV, pp. 161ff.

"Rights" in Wesleyan Thought

Certainly there was not, for Wesley, the set of distinctions St. Thomas Aquinas made regarding the law. If Wesley divided it at all it was, like St. Augustine, between divine law (known through revelation) and positive law (made by man in legislatures). Positive law should correspond to divine law, and when it did not, Wesley thought that the individual must follow the dictates of conscience and his understanding of God's will for man. How is a Christian to know God's will? Through recourse to revelation as put forth in the Bible. This was the ground upon which Wesley steadfastly stood.[26] With regard to such specific rights as life, liberty, and happiness (as stated by Jefferson in the American Declaration of

---

[25] William R. Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1946), p. 175. Cannon says that Wesley meant the same thing as the Enlightenment when he suggested that the moral law is supreme, unchangeable reason--a copy of the eternal mind, or a transcript of the divine law of nature. It can be maintained that Wesley did, in fact, accept natural law, but renamed it ("moral law") and revised the method of knowing it (through revelation rather than reason). According to the various definitions of natural law used in the development of the concept, however, one necessary attribute was that it could be known through reason (which was why it was "natural"). Since Wesley used another name, and since he rejected the use of reason for what he termed the moral law, it is possible to conclude that Wesley was indeed using the terminology, but not the conceptualization, of the eighteenth century. Therefore, it is also possible to conclude that Cannon errs in his interpretation.

[26] Works, Vol. V, p. 473 (Sermon xxxvii); pp. 441, 446 (Sermon xxxiv).

Independence), or as life, liberty, and property (as stated by Locke), Wesley clearly maintained that all of these were dependent solely upon God's will and were received from God not as rights but through grace. God had sole power and authority over life and death (see above), liberty was basically a function of prevenient grace, happiness was a result of sanctification, and property was available from God for man's use but not his exploitation (see sec. on property). It should be noted that many conservatives in the eighteenth century (including much of Tory ideology) rejected the natural rights thesis because of the libertarian implications. This was particularly true with regard to the notions of equality and liberty. Wesley, however, refused to give up the ideas of liberty and equality, but he did found them on concepts other than natural rights. Thus Wesley conformed to neither the libertarian nor conservative patterns of the day.

The Contract Theory

The natural law and natural rights problems in eighteenth century thought were ultimately related to the contract theory of government. The reason for the relationship was the attempt to provide a defense for the alleged natural rights. Since Wesley rejected the idea of natural rights it was not necessary to accept the framework which provided its defense. In his rejection of the contract Wesley was a "forerunner of a new age," for he "flatly discredited and even mocked the idea."[27] He denied the contract theory both historically and philosophically. Historically Wesley asked for a demonstration of the theory and then said that in fact no demonstration could be given for there had never been a time when man was without society.[28] Moreover, as far as he could see, there was never a time when "the people" had, in reality, ever instituted any kind of a government.[29] All of this is closely related to Wesley's acceptance of the Aristotelian concept of the natural sociability of man. This constitutes one part of Wesley's philosophical rejection of the contract, and his notion that power derives directly from God constitutes the other.

---

[27] Maldwyn Edwards, John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 23.

Assessment

In rejecting the natural law-natural rights-contract thesis Wesley rejected the basis for eighteenth century libertarian political thought. In the rejection of natural rights and contract he came much closer to Burke, whose wisdom Wesley questioned, than to the members of the rationalistic enlightenment.[30] Burke also questioned, in part on historical grounds and in part on Aristotelian grounds, the thesis of natural rights and the social and/or political contract.[31] Wesley differed from Burke, however, on the organic character of the state. This interpretation is buttressed by Wesley's firm acceptance of the Revolution Settlement. This acceptance may be regarded as the acceptance of an "artificial" rather than an "organic" theory of the development of a government. In opposition to Burke's view that the state could only be the product of a gradual and organic development, Wesley thought that either man or God could fashion the state as they pleased. The term "artificial" is used here to designate this potentiality of control by both God and man.[32]

---

[28] *Some Observations on Liberty*, *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 96-97.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 96-118.

[30] *Letters*, Vol. V, p. 384 (to a Friend, December, 1768); Vol. VI, p. 187 (to his brother Charles, November, 1775).

[31] Donald Atwell Zoll, *Reason and Rebellion* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 199.

In one sense, insofar as Wesley based his objection to natural rights and natural law on his acceptance of empiricism, he came rather close to the unlikely person of David Hume. Hume took the thesis of the tabula rasa to its logical conclusion and rejected "any notion of natural law or supernaturalism."[33] Hume and Wesley were one with regard to natural law though at odds with respect to the idea of God. Where Wesley accepted the idea of faith, Hume was skeptical of it. This comparison cannot be carried too far, of course, but the extent to which it holds is interesting. In the final analysis, while all of the factors outlined above contributed to Wesley's rejection of natural law and natural rights, he was, nevertheless, convinced first and foremost that God's sovereign and creative character prohibited man from rationally (hence naturally) appropriating knowledge which God alone could give.[34]

---

[32] In the rejection of organism Wesley rejected the foundation for the so-called environmentalist interpretation of history as developed by such an historian as Daniel J. Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 1-7. Yet Boorstin goes beyond environmental determination in suggesting that the "environment" which determines change and institutions is provided only within a framework of organic growth.

[33] Zoll, op. cit., p. 214.

Property

A third aspect of Wesley's political thought which revolved around his concept of God's sovereignty was his concept of property. Both Locke and Wesley agreed that God gave the earth to the whole of mankind in common. Locke sought to show, however, that men "might come to have a property in several parts of that which God gave to mankind in common, and that without any express compact of all the commoners." Locke argued that individual men mixed labor with the grant of nature that had been provided, and the produce

---

[34] Compare Wesley also to Montesquieu in terms of the rejection of the contract. See, for example, David Lowenthal, "Montesquieu," and Francis Canavan, "Edmund Burke," History of Political Theory, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1963), pp. 469-490, 601-624, respectively. It might be noted that in Some Observations on Liberty, pp. 96-118, Wesley gave a series of illustrations which were alleged to be examples of people establishing a governmental (as distinguished from social) contract. In each case Wesley gave what he thought to be a sufficient refutation. Much of the tract was devoted to a refutation of Caleb Evans (A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley [London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775], p. 7) who proposed a typical natural rights-contract theory. See also, A Calm Address to our American Colonies, Works, Vol. XI, p. 81. Here Wesley not only opposes the contract and natural rights thesis but also puts forth an empirical analysis of the English Constitution and denies the conception of the English Constitution put forth by the "fanciful Montesquieu." There was some failure by Wesley to distinguish clearly between the social and governmental contract theories, but on the whole, he denied both.

"excludes the common right of other men."[35] The reason for this is that "labour being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what [it] is once joined to, at least where there is enough and as good left in common for others."[36] As a result of these assumptions, property became for Locke an unalienable right which was to be defended. The defense of property -- through the medium of consent -- was an important issue in his writings.

Wesley, unlike much of the eighteenth century, did not follow Locke. Property was never any man's unalienable right, for any given man held property only as a steward of God and God could at any time take the property away.[37] In this lies the idea that God, in his capacity as sovereign, makes the final choice as to the disposition of property. Because God is sovereign "he must be the possessor of all that is."[38] Because God is the sole possessor of all that is, he might resume his own property at any time, and man may use property only for those purposes which God has specified. If man failed to use property as God specified, then man had no moral right in it. It is possible, though by no means clear, that Wesley thought that the legal right to property was also in doubt if man contravened God's law in the use of property. Thus, for Wesley, man was not an owner of property, but a trustee or steward of it.[39] One difference between Wesley and Locke seems to lie in the fact that Locke was interested in man's relationship to man while Wesley was concerned with man's relation to God. A further difference lies in the purposes which each man assigned to government. Locke wanted, among other things, to protect the right to property, while Wesley was concerned about God's relationship to man within the social context. In this sense it can perhaps be said that Locke's concern was with a defense of a particular vested interest while Wesley's was with man's immortal soul.[40]

---

[35] John Locke, "Of Property," Two Treatises on Government, 2nd Treatise (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 133-134.

[36] Ibid., p. 134.

[37] Works, Vol. VII, pp. 308-309 (Sermon cxix).

[38] Ibid., p. 309.

Equality

Wesley's Equalitarianism

Another aspect of Wesley's political thought that relates to his idea of God is the problem of equality. There are attributes of Wesley's concept of equality that have to be interpreted with reference to both the idea of God as sovereign and the idea of God as governor. One of the paradoxical aspects of Wesley's thought is the fact that while he claimed to be a Tory and a monarchist, he nevertheless infused into the English lower classes the concept of equality which seems to be a necessary (though not sufficient) attribute in the building of a democratic temper. The thought of the intelligentsia of the eighteenth century commonly included an anti-democratic element which manifested itself in an elitist political theory. Illustrative of this, both for the Continent and for Britain, is the attitude of Voltaire. Voltaire thought that given man's essentially negative character only a rather rigidly structured society was desirable or even possible. Thus, "with such . . . dispositions it is just as impossible for men to be equal as it is impossible for two preachers or two professors of theology not to be jealous of one another."[41] Wesley vehemently disliked Voltaire and at one point said that if the English "publisher of that poor wretch's works writes a panegyric upon him . . . I shall think it my duty to go a little further and show the real value of those writings."[42] Wesley's reaction to Voltaire came from a dislike both of Voltaire's Deism and of his ethics, one aspect of which was his (Voltaire's) denial of equality which contrasted sharply to Wesley's attitude as demonstrated in his reaction toward the class structure of the day and toward race. Wesley's attitude is grounded firmly in his theology and in his ethics.

---

[39] Works, Vol. VI, p. 136 (Sermon li).

[40] For further information on Wesley's concept of property and its implications, see MacArthur, op. cit., pp. 123-124, and Oscar Sherwin, John Wesley: Friend of the People (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961), p. 11.

---

[41] Voltaire, Philosophical Dictionary, trans. Peter Gay (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), Vol. I, pp. 246-247.

[42] Letters, Vol. VI, pp. 332-333 (to Mr. ____, January, 1779). Wesley tended to be a little violent in his likes and dislikes concerning Voltaire. He once wrote the following: "On the road I read over Voltaire's Memoirs of himself. Certainly never was a more consummate coxcomb! But even his character is less horrid than that of his royal hero [Frederick II]! Surely as unnatural a brute never disgraced a throne before!" Journal, Works, Vol. IV, p. 287 (August 26, 1784).

The Theology of Equality

Wesley had a wide-ranging influence in the lives of the people he touched because of the message he carried. The theology which he propounded was "democratic in its implications."[43] It is clear that there was in Wesleyan theology an equality of evil, an equality of grace, and an equality of freedom.[44] Wesley did not, like the Calvinists, stop with the idea that all men were depraved. He went on to assert the universal attributes of God's grace. If by nature all men were equally damned, then by God's grace all men had an equal opportunity to be saved.[45] In order to be saved, however, it was necessary for all men to be able to respond freely to God's gift. In the doctrine of prevenient grace Wesley found the concept which he thought accounted for the possibility of all men responding freely to God. Freedom and conscience for man, then, arose out of God's prevenient grace. Thus, the "Christian experience was possible to all men. Wesley declared that it came not through birth nor culture nor intellect, but through a change of heart."[46] The problem of man's depravity is, of course, connected with Wesley's doctrine of man. The problem of grace generally must be associated with God's sovereignty while the concept of prevenient grace as used here is to be associated with God's role as governor. The other major theoretical ground for Wesley's concept of equality was his social ethic, and particularly, his concept of Christian love. This relates more nearly to his doctrine of man, however, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

---

[43] Edwards, _op. cit._, p. 179.

[44] See _Journal_, _Works_, Vol. I, p. 198 (June, 1739): In his sermons to the people of England and in his writings, Wesley declared "plainly, the Scriptures had concluded them all under sin;--high and low, rich and poor, one with another."

[45] _Letters_, Vol. VII, p. 195 (to Captain Richard Williams, November, 1785).

Implications of Equality

The political implications of Wesley's concept of equality, as outlined above, were various and ambivalent. Wesley saw no direct connection between his concept of equality and the rejection of the one-man-one-vote thesis in politics (see Chap. IV, sec. on forms of government). With regard to other politically relevant issues, however, he made a direct and clear connection. Among these were his views on race and slavery, and on the class structure of the England of his day. Considerably more will be said of these problems in the next chapter.[47] In addition, Wesley firmly believed in equality before the law. It is clear, then, that Wesley rejected such diverse anti-egalitarian notions as those represented by Voltaire and Burke. It is just as clear that he did not carry his ideas concerning equality to their systematic conclusion to all aspects of the political life.

---

[46] Edwards, op. cit., p. 179. On this note, see also the comments of John M. Todd, op. cit., pp. 103-104; Thomas Walter Herbert, John Wesley as Editor and Author (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 103; and Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1939), pp. 36-37. The import of Wesley's egalitarian spirit is characterized in a favorite sermon topic of his: "I preached on those words in the Second Lesson, 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: But Christ is all and in all'." Journal, Works, Vol. IV, p. 212 (July, 1781). See also, the rather neat summary of Wesley's position in Dorothy Marshall, Eighteenth Century England (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 244-245.

Liberty

A concept not unrelated to the idea of equality is that of liberty. The idea of liberty, which is one of the major emphases in Wesley's political tracts, was intimately related to his idea of God. The essential freedom for the individual was the ability he had from God to accept or reject good or evil. In fact, Wesley believed that the greatest liberty was the liberty to obey God in all things.[48] Since the greatest liberty was to obey God, then all avenues of obedience must, of necessity, remain open. Thus, in Wesley's view, the central purpose of such freedoms as speech and press were necessary adjuncts for the maintenance of potential obedience. While Wesley extended his ideas of liberty beyond this God-oriented concept, it remained the foundation of his position.

---

[47] For an extensive treatment of Wesley's ideas concerning race see Thomas Wm. Madron, "John Wesley on Race: A Christian View of Equality," Methodist History, II (July, 1964), pp. 24-34.

[48] The Difference Between the Moravians and Methodists, Works, Vol. X, p. 203. In the same passage Wesley remarks that the difference between the Moravians and the Methodists was that the Moravians were antinomian in that they thought that liberty was freedom from the law of God. This was the reverse of Wesley's position.

The ability to distinguish between good and evil was a gift of God in prevenient grace. In prevenient grace God granted both liberty of will and conscience to man. Herein lies the work of God as governor, for to endow man with freedom God necessarily refrains from engaging in some acts without the cooperation of man. This theological concept of liberty was related to civil liberty as the soul itself was related to the body of the individual: the one could not be fully operative without the other.[49]

The Nature of Liberty

"Liberty," in its most general sense, may be defined as an exemption or release from bondage of any variety. Freedom of the will, as discussed above, is possible because God frees man from the bondage of original sin (through prevenient grace) to the extent that man may distinguish and choose between good and evil. Commonly, civil liberty is viewed, as in the United States Constitution, as freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly. Freedom, in this sense, seems to mean the state of being able to act without hindrance or restraint. Freedom may also be defined as the right of participation in the privileges attached to membership in a company or trade, or to citizenship in a town or city or state.

---

[49] Works, Vol. VI, p. 343 (Sermon lxix). Concerning God's grant of freedom, see Works, Vol. VII, p. 229 (Sermon cix).

Although Wesley always recognized that liberty was concerned with the rights of participation in the privileges of citizenship,[50] he nevertheless emphasized the more negative connotations of liberty and freedom. Civil liberty, said Wesley, "is a liberty to dispose of our lives, persons, and fortunes, according to our own choice, and the laws of our country."[51] He contended that Englishmen were in fact free, and until the government took away civil and religious liberty they remained free.[52] In more specific terms, Wesley concurred with the framers of the first amendment to the United States Constitution in believing that liberty was to be conceived of as the freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly.

The Concern for Liberty

Wesley's concern for these freedoms was fostered in part by necessity. He was forced to demand them as a result of varied attempts to prohibit Methodist speeches, pamphlets, and meetings.

---

[50] This, it must be noted, did not include the right to vote, but did include such things as equal protection under the law. Both the King and his subjects, thought Wesley, must be obedient to the laws of the state. He was particularly cognizant of this privilege of legal redress, for he had made extensive use of the courts in actions to protect the Methodists (*Letters*, *Works*, Vol. XII [to the Rev. Mr. Wanley, July, 1766]).

[51] *Observations on Liberty*, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 92; also, *Thoughts upon Liberty*, *ibid*., p. 41.

[52] So long as the government protected and guaranteed a modicum of liberty (of religion, speech, press, and assembly), within limits it might be regulated by the government. Should laws be passed which violated liberty the law could no longer demand allegiance for conscience' sake. If the violations were severe enough God's authority would be withdrawn from the government thus negating the authority of its "laws."

Wesley's concern was also related to liberty of conscience, and to the need to be free to express the convictions of that conscience. A final source of these particular freedoms, Wesley thought, was the Revolution Settlement: "English liberty commenced at the Revolution."[53]

The demand for freedom of religion arose as a result of the need for toleration of the Methodists. This, as might be expected, was also closely connected with Wesley's conviction of the truth of the doctrine of prevenient grace. Conscience, which arises from prevenient grace, forms the basis for his concept of religious freedom. Conscience had to be allowed free play. To impede man's use of this freedom would be to controvene God's own will. Liberty of conscience, according to Wesley, is "that liberty which every man may claim as his right, by the law of God and nature, and to which every Englishman, in particular, has a right by the laws of his county."[54] Wesley's concern for freedom of religion is illustrated in his censure of Calvin for the execution of Michael Servetus,[55] and in his dismay over the persecution of the Quakers by onetime governor of New England, John Endicott: "O Who would have looked for Father inquisitors at Boston," Wesley exclaimed.[56]

---

[53] A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England, Works, Vol. XI, p. 137. Wesley thought that by the time of the Glorious Revolution the Stuart Monarchy had lost its mandate from God to govern England.

[54] Letters, Vol. V, p. 22 (to Francis Wanley, July, 1766). The use of the term "law of nature" in this passage and elsewhere in Wesley's works (see Thoughts upon Slavery, Works, Vol. XI, p. 79) should not be construed as a natural rights or natural law theory. Since Wesley believed that the "Laws of Nature" were laws of God and that these were known only through revelation (not reason), there was nothing "natural" about them (in the natural law sense). Here Wesley had merely fallen into conventional eighteenth century linguistic usages. At least one important Wesleyan scholar (Wellman J. Warner, The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution [London: Longmans, Green and Col, 1930], p. 104) confuses the terminology with the idea.

The Content of Liberty

Wesley was convinced that freedom of speech, press, and assembly were essential to the maintenance of liberty. He also thought that in the main, these freedoms were protected by English law: "Every man says what he will, writes what he will, prints what he will."[57] Even though he thought some of the literature defending Wilkes (see Chap. IV, sec. on representation) was virtually treasonous,[58] Wesley categorically denied the possibility of censorship. How is it possible to remove such literature, Wesley asked, and answered: "[only] by restraining the licentiousness of the press? and is not this remedy worse than the disease?"[59] Wesley held to this view of freedom of the press even though he could only regard much of what was printed as reprehensible or indecent. His position with respect to freedom of speech was very similar to the foregoing. Freedom of speech carries with it the corollary of freedom of assembly. One without the other would be of little worth. Because the Methodists did not claim the right of dissenters under the Act of Toleration, the full force of the Conventicle Act could be (and sometimes was) used against them (see Chap. V). The Conventicle Act prohibited both free speech and free assembly.[60] Other legal procedures, such as the Riot Act and impressment, were sometimes used against Methodists and these were clearly seen by Wesley to affect freedom of speech and assembly.[61] The Riot Act -- which dealt with violent assemblies -- was not very precise. It was possible, therefore, to define nearly any assembly as violent. Finally, Wesley's forthright objection to general warrants, which were used to inhibit free speech and press (although never used against Wesley or the Methodists), further attests to his concern for these liberties.[62]

---

[55] Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 318 (July, 1741).

[56] Ibid., p. 459 (April, 1744). See ibid., Vol. II, p. 239 (August, 1751); Letters, Vol. III, p. 7 (to his Brother Charles, June, 1749), p. 38 (to the Mayor of Cork, May, 1750); and the comment in John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (3rd. ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 296.

[57] A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England, Works, Vol. XI, p. 137.

[58] Thoughts upon Liberty, pp. 42-43,44.

[59] Ibid., p. 45. For a brief discussion of this, see Warner, op. cit., p. 105.

Even during periods of rather extreme agitation, such as the time of the Wilkes affair and the American Revolution, Wesley would not deny the freedoms discussed above. Against those critics of the government who cried that liberty was denied, Wesley contended that English liberty was, in the main, being preserved. While he recognized that English liberty was not perfect, yet the individual was protected by the laws. Wesley was of the opinion (in the 1770's) that he was "in no more danger of death from King George, than from the Queen of Hungary." He confused the issue, however, by adding that "if I study to be quiet and mind my own business, I am in no more danger of losing my liberty than my life."[63] The question that is immediately raised is that if a man cannot express himself, then in what sense is that man actually free? This comment, which seems somewhat inconsistent with his broad views on freedom of speech, press, and assembly, is best explained as simply a rhetorical device used in a controversy. The very fact that the above comment appeared in a controversial pamphlet, Thoughts Upon Liberty (1772), written in response to the pro-Wilkes Letters of Junius (which was equally controversial), attests to both the actual freedom of the press and Wesley's own determination not to be silent.

---

[60] Ibid., p. 39.

[61] Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 212.

[62] Free Thought on the Present State of Public Affairs, Works, Vol. XI, p. 20.

The Threats to Liberty

Clearly Wesley was cognizant of the threats to liberty, but he felt that such threats had two sources: on the one hand, the government -- or more generally, any people with power -- might deny liberty, but on the other hand, if liberty should descend to license, then this too, would amount to a denial of liberty.[64] What Wesley finally called for were laws to make authors liable for the truth of what they wrote, but for this only. He did not want laws making authors liable for critical, though truthful, remarks.[65]

---

[63] Thoughts Upon Liberty, p. 41.

The Assessment of Liberty

In terms of "liberty" then, it may be suggested that Wesley thought civil liberty (including freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly) should be protected. This is implicit in what has been said heretofore, as well as in various critical remarks Wesley made concerning the state of liberty.[66] In Wesley's view there were, implicitly and explicitly, two foundations for English liberty: the grants of grace by God to man, and English law as established by the Revolution Settlement. The former is not to be construed as a natural right theory, for Wesley thought that civil liberty, though related to God's grace, was, in an historical sense, founded primarily on law.[67] This concern for law led Wesley to defend the right to property as a civil liberty. As the earlier analysis of Wesley's concept of property demonstrates, however, he did not see the right of property as an absolute. This differed, moreover, from the other civil liberties, because of its different relationship to God. Freedom of religion, press, speech, and assembly were necessary to insure that God could be served according to the dictates of conscience. Unrestricted private use of property, on the other hand, was itself a denial of the God-given function of property. In these ideas are embodied the notion that the greatest liberty is the ability to choose and serve God.

---

[64] Ibid., pp. 36-37. Wesley is often criticized for such comments as the following: "That 'many-headed beast' the people roars for liberty of another kind." (Ibid., p. 42.) However, it must be noted that Wesley felt that the people in their condition at that time, were a beast (due to original sin), but, he also thought that through Christian conversion, they could be changed, and, if changed, they would be no longer a "many-headed beast." It should be added as well that this attitude was unrelated to social class.

[65] Ibid., p. 45.

[66] Examples of this may be found in Wesley's criticism of Charles II for his support of the Act of the Uniformity and Conventicle Act (Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 311 [Feb., 1768]), and in his criticism of impressment (Ibid., Vol. I, p. 212, [July, 1799]).

[67] A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England, p. 137.

In concluding this analysis of Wesley's concept of liberty, it must be pointed out that he did not equate liberty with democracy. He rejected the idea of majoritarian rule and the related notion of one-man-one-vote, and in this he rejected a narrow definition of political liberty. For Wesley political liberty consisted in the legal capacity to enjoy freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly. Both democratic and non-democratic governments may also be illiberal to the extent that they deny individual liberty.[68] With these propositions Wesley would probably agree with the added thought that democracy was most apt to degenerate into tyranny and thus deny individual liberty.[69] Ultimately, Wesley believed, man's capacity for liberty depended upon God and God's relationship to man through prevenient grace. Man's ability to use liberty was directly related to his position in the process of salvation and limited, consequently, by the influence of original sin.[70] The perfected Christian would, therefore, be capable of using liberty most competently.

---

[68] For a full exposition of this thesis see Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., The American Democratic Tradition (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963), p. 4. It should perhaps be noted that this position, though historically valid, is contrary to most contemporary majoritarian or populistic democratic theories.

[69] Wesley, on occasion, admitted (begrudgingly) that a democratic government might be legitimate (sanctioned by God). Such a legitimate government would have to protect at least a modicum of

Order and Change

The Need for Order

Closely related to the problem of liberty are the twin concepts of order and change. Some allusion to these has already been made. As Wesley's attitude with regard to liberty suggests, he placed a high premium on order. This stemmed partly from his High-Church, neo-Jacobite upbringing, partly from his "theology" of power and authority, and partly from his concern for the maintenance of the Methodist system. Important for this chapter is the second point. Since power and authority were derived from God, objection to the state would involve, in effect, an objection to God. It was this that had to be avoided. "Loyalty is with me," he

---

freedom in order to retain its God-given authority (see implications of Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power, Works, Vol. XI, p. 47). After the conclusion of the American Revolution Wesley finally admitted that God had ordained the American success, and that the United States government was legitimate.

[70] Compare with Edwards, op. cit., pp. 32-33; Warner, op. cit., pp. 104-106; and R. M. MacIver, op. cit., pp. 200-202.

said, "an essential branch of religion, and which I am sorry any Methodist should forget."[71] He maintained that there was an intrinsic connection between his religious and his political behavior. Wesley believed that the same authority demanded that he respect God and honor the King. From this he drew the conclusion that those who act in a manner contrary to the laws of the community shall receive condemnation not "only from the magistrate, but from God also."[72] Though Wesley obviously placed a high premium on order (and here he was consistent with thinkers like Burke), he did, significantly enough, provide for the possibility of change, perhaps even revolutionary change.

The Basis for Change

The theological basis of change lay in two aspects of Wesley's thought. First, because of Christian conversion, Wesley thought that the individual could undergo radical psychological change within a short period of time. Wesley firmly believed that if this happened in sufficiently large numbers the social order itself would undergo radical change. This kind of change, however, was of a different kind from that suggested by the second theological basis of change: the Christian's conscience. Wesley thought that men might resist government and the constituted order when conscience demanded that course of action. No one, said Wesley, is obligated to obey the command of even the King if in all good conscience it is determined that the command goes against the law of God or the law of the land.[73] Even the Pauline dictum regarding the origin of power Wesley modified slightly so that his interpretation allows that "some particular exceptions" must be made to the general proposition regarding the authority of the government.[74] It should be added that Wesley was not opposed to orderly and lawful change and this is demonstrated by his advocacy of such proposals as the abolition of the slave trade.

---

[71] Letters, Vol. VI, p. 267 (to Walter Churchey, June, 1777).

[72] Explanatory Notes, pp. 571-572.

The Right of Revolution

Along with this approach to change there is an incipient concept of the right to revolution. Wesley was quoted above as implying that there might be a right to depose a King. His further advocacy of the Revolution Settlement confirms this position. One additional theological proposition of Wesley's is relevant to this discussion. He thought that God sometimes directly entered the historical process, and that God, in doing this, sometimes worked through social upheavals. This is amply illustrated in Wesley's later analyses of the American Revolution and specifically illustrated in a brief comment he made concerning the French Revolution. In 1790 Wesley wrote:

> One would hope the time is approaching when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Indeed,

---

[73] Journal, Works, Vol. IV, p. 100 (June, 1777).

[74] Explanatory Notes, p. 572.

> the amazing revolutions which have [been in] Europe seem to be the forerunners of the same grand event.[75]

In March of the same year he went on to say that God "is doing great things in many parts of Europe such as have not been seen for many generations; and the children of God expect to see greater things than these."[76] This concept of the dynamic role which God may play in history taken together with his ideas concerning conscience form the basis for a notion of the right to revolution. The point Wesley often made with regard to this "right," however, was that it was necessary to be very sure that revolution was actually the only alternative left in a given situation. In conclusion, it may be said that Wesley's idea of order is closely related to his notion of God's sovereignty while his ideas concerning change are related more nearly to God's role as governor.

Justice

A final attribute of Wesley's political philosophy related to his concept of God is the idea of justice. For Wesley, justice was not founded upon natural law nor upon natural rights, but rather upon the demands of love as set forth in his interpretation of the New Testament revelation. H. Richard Niebuhr has been highly critical of Wesley for this and contends that Wesley and Methodism "regarded movements toward equality as concessions made out of love rather than as demands of justice."[77] Contrary to this, however, Wesley thought that real justice must in fact be based upon God's law of love (see above, Chap. II, sec. on ethics). According to Wesley a second factor was operative, as well. Since governmental authority had its source in God, those upon whom the mantle of authority fell should rule consistently with God's demands for justice arising out of love. The very purpose of those who govern was "to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured, and punish the wrongdoer!" Governors should be holy as God is holy:

---

[75] Letters, Vol. VIII, pp. 199-200 (to Thomas Morrell, February, 1790).

[76] Ibid., p. 204 (to William Black, March, 1790). From these quotations it would seem that Wesley approved of the French Revolution, at least in its early stages. This is an interesting "reversal" from his negative attitude toward the American Revolution. It is also interesting to note that this stand is the exact opposite of that of Burke. It should be noted, of course, that these revolutions are of a different type: the American was one of colonials against the mother country, while that of the French was an uprising of the French people against their own government. This view of the French Revolution fits well with Wesley's criticism of the French Monarchy, however.

> No respecters of persons, as He is none; but rendering to every man according to his works; like Him inflexibly, inexorably just, though pitiful and of tender mercy! . . . So shall the laws of our land have their full use and due honour, and the throne of our king be still established in righteousness.[78]

Justice was, for Wesley, an important feature of any political system. He thought, however, that justice could only arise out of God's relationship to man. The love concept, related as it was to God's role as governor, and the principle of God given authority, related to God's role as sovereign, provided the twin foundations for Wesley's concept of justice. Justice was possible, in the final analysis, because God himself was just (an attribute of God's role as governor). Because God was just it was imperative that those who worked on his behalf (in this case, earthly governors) should also be just. When government ceased being just, it no longer operated according to God's will and authority.

---

[77] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957, first printed, 1929).

[78] Works, Vol. VI, p. 182 (Sermon xv).

Conclusion

In attempting to summarize this chapter it might be said initially that Wesley thought that God played a dynamic role in human history. This has been a common element in virtually all of the ideas here discussed. Beyond this, all of the ideas analyzed in this chapter are closely related to the two distinctive roles Wesley thought God played: that of sovereign and that of governor. Thus, to a large extent, Wesley's interpretations of power and authority, of natural law and natural rights, and of property, are based upon his interpretation of God as sovereign. The concept of equality clearly overlaps God's two roles. The idea of liberty falls largely within the province of God as governor while the dual problem of order and change is related (in the case of the former) to God's sovereignty (and in the case of the latter) to God's governorship. Wesley's idea of justice relates largely to God's role as governor, though with this, too, there is some overlapping. Most of the criticisms that have been put forth are a result of Wesley's failure to be wholly consistent and systematic. Without a doubt, however, there is in Wesley's thought a clear relationship between his theology and the political ideas herein analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

ELEMENTS OF WESLEY'S POLITICAL THOUGHT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS CONCEPT OF MAN

The object of this chapter is to analyze that part of Wesley's political thought which relates more directly to his concept of man than to his concept of God. Of primary importance here is the negative view of human nature which Wesley held. The issues chosen for analysis do not include the entire universe of issues in political philosophy, but they do exhaust those problems with which Wesley was concerned. Some of the issues considered here are closely related to several of the problems in the preceding chapter. The reason for this is that a number of Wesley's ideas were based upon both his theology of God and his theology of man.

The point was made in Chapter II that Wesley had an essentially negative attitude toward human nature. This pessimism concerning human nature rose out of the acceptance of the orthodox Christian doctrine of original sin. Wesley's doctrine of sin is divisible into two parts. First, there was the sin that formed the basic corruption of man's nature stemming from the Fall (original sin); and secondly, there was the sin that was a willful contravention of God's law. Both of these forms of sin were essential to Wesley's thought, and both tended to make social life chaotic. Although political authority came from God, there was a human need for government, for authority, and for the order which was the consequence of government and authority.

Order and Change

The Need for Order

Wesley's concern for order arose, as has already been noted, from his Tory upbringing, from this theology of power and authority, and from his desire to maintain the Methodist system. In addition, he saw in sinful man the reason why order must be maintained. Man's sinfulness could only result in social disorder and the violation of law. The view that under normal circumstances the violation of positive law was also a violation of God's will provided Wesley with the impetus for his concern for order.[1]

Because government was invested with divine authority, Wesley believed that government had an ethical and moral responsibility to maintain order. He thought that the primary purpose of government was to inhibit evil. Important as other attributes of government were, they were subsidiary to this basic concern. Human laws, said Wesley, "may restrain from outward sin."[2] Those men who composed the government of a state were the "grand supporters of public tranquility."[3] In order to carry out this objective (of public tranquility) those who govern were "to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured, and punish the wrongdoer."[4] Thus it is clear that the government of the state had a moral purpose.

---

[1] Supra., chap. III, sec. on natural law and natural rights. See Explanatory Notes, pp. 571-572.

[2] Letters, Vol. II, p. 135 (to "John Smith," March, 1748).

[3] Works, Vol. V, p. 182 (Sermon xv). [4] Ibid.

These purposes for government were necessitated by God's demands on the one hand (see Chap. III) and by man's sinfulness on the other. The view that the government (at the minimum) performs an ethical function by its maintenance of order was one of the reasons why Wesley thought that men should generally be subject to the powers that be.

In his general concern for order Wesley was in step with many thinkers of his century. Such diverse men as Hume and Burke held attitudes not greatly different (in the behavioral norms they suggested) from Wesley. Hume, for example, contended that one primary duty for man was obedience to government, and admitted the possibility of disobedience only in extraordinary emergencies.[5] For Burke, traditional institutions represented a wisdom and goodness in themselves. The result of this thesis was that social and political disruptions should be avoided and that order and orderly change are desirable ends. Like Hume, however, Burke admitted that under some extreme situations "it was necessary to raise and answer theoretical questions about the constitutive principles of the state."[6] Wesley, like Hume and Burke (notwithstanding the differences between Wesley and Burke concerning the American Revolution), thought that order was a positive virtue, but was somewhat less fearful of those situations in which order gave way to superior virtue.

---

[5] Robert S. Hill, "David Hume," in History of Political Philosophy, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1963), pp. 507-508. The duty of obedience was, for Hume, an "artificial" virtue. Artificial virtues are those arrived at through thought and reflection. Natural instincts, in contrast, if left unrestrained by artificial virtues, would lead to inequity and insubordination.

[6] Francis Canavan, op. cit., p. 604.

The Possibility of Change

Although Wesley advocated a rather thorough concept of order he did not maintain that there was no possibility for change. Nor did he acknowledge the thesis that there should be no liberty.[7] The problem of change, it will be recalled, is related, in Wesley's thought, to prevenient grace. While prevenient grace is itself a gift of God, it nevertheless allows man to make free responses not only to God but to the universe in which man finds himself. Thus, man's decision for change, whether as an act of conscience or as an act of liberty, is a free act for which man is responsible. Therefore, while God, in the final analysis, makes such freedom possible, man enters dynamically into the social process with freedom and responsibility. It is this ability in man to act freely that relates social change to Wesley's theology of man. Wesley's concept of liberty has previously been explicated. It is to be noted that he thought during the period in which he lived, though liberty was not perfect,[8] liberty could be undermined as much by license as by power. Notwithstanding this position, however, he thought that at some times it might be necessary to go as far as removing kings.[9] Such an exercise of liberty, he held, would have to be entered into with some fear and trepidation.

---

[7] Maldwyn Edwards, *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 32, contends that Wesley's concept of order should have led him to take Hobbes' position with respect to the centralization of authority and power and to the consequences this might entail for liberty. This interpretation fails to recognize several problems among which were the bifurcation of attitudes toward order and change generally in the eighteenth century and also Wesley's concern not only with liberty, but with equality and political morality in general.

That Wesley thought that there were times when kings should be deposed there can be no doubt. Of particular importance with reference to this is his support of the Revolution Settlement and his criticism of several acts of the monarchy which laid the foundation for the Revolution. Among the legal measures supported by the Crown and vehemently disliked by Wesley were the Act of Uniformity (1662) and the Conventicle Act (1670) and the subsequent acts modifying or continuing in principle this legislation. These acts, it might be noted, were closely akin in their import and purposes to such acts as the "Smith Act" in twentieth century America. In other words, they were regarded as security measures aimed at "seditious" movements which often took the form of religious groups and almost always had a religiously or theologically based ideology.[10] On a number of occasions attempts were made to use both the Act of Uniformity and the Conventicle Act as well as the Riot Act (1715) against Wesley.[11] His response on such occasions included recourse to law courts and sometimes rather bitter criticism. Under these acts, he said, Englishmen were "first robbed of their liberty; often of their lives also."[12] Wesley took the rather strong position that

---

[8] This interpretation disagrees with that of Edwards, for he claims that Wesley thought that the English had perfect liberty (p. 48).

[9] Thoughts upon Liberty, Works, Vol. XI, p. 37.

[10] For the texts of the Act of Uniformity and the Conventicle Act, see Andrew Browning, English Historical Documents (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), Vol. VIII, pp. 377-382; 384-386.

> . . . if a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me, no Church has power to enjoin me silence. Neither has the State; though it may abuse its power and enact laws whereby I suffer for preaching the gospel.[13]

This attitude was related to man's conscience and as soon as laws of either the church or state became inconsistent with a good conscience, they no longer demanded, nor could they demand, obedience.[14] This position is not, of course, particularly original, for it has been a common approach in the history of Christian political philosophy. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, put forth much the same idea with respect to laws which were opposed to God's dictates.

It may be said, then, that the function of power and authority with respect to political society was for the purpose of maintaining order. Because of man's naturally sinful qualities it was impossible for him to live amicably without the intervention of the state. For most occasions, therefore, God delivered power and authority to those who governed. Should the governors become corrupt and opposed to God's ordinances, however, man had no moral compulsion to obey and, in fact, if conditions were severe enough, could rebel. Among those things which the state should enforce was liberty, and liberty itself gives rise to the possibility of peaceful change.

---

[11] See Chap. V below for greater detail concerning these various acts.

[12] Thoughts upon Liberty, Works, Vol. XI, p. 39.

[13] Letters, Vol. IV, p.147 (to the Earl of Dartmouth, April, 1761).

[14] Ibid.

Property

Like the problem of order and change, the concept of property has a twofold relationship -- with God on the one hand and with man on the other. As was suggested in the preceding chapter, property was never any man's unalienable right. Man's "right" to property came only through his good use of the property he possessed. The responsibility of man for the use of his property was the human side of the question of property in Wesleyan thought. This position is related not only to the Wesleyan position that God gave property to all men in common, but also to that aspect of his theology dealing with sanctification and man's capabilities after Christian conversion.

If man did not use the property with which God had entrusted him properly, then that man had no right in that property (see preceding chapter). The charge which Wesley directed to the rich was, "be ye 'ready to distribute' to every one, according to his necessity."[15] This is essentially what Wesley meant when he counseled people to gain all they can, save all they can, and give all they can.[16] In its highest development, this concept of distribution according to need refers back to what Wesley thought was the highest concept of economic organization -- that of primitive communism -- an organization he thought the earliest Christians had.[17] The outcome of Christian love was to be a society in which all things would be held in common. Thus, in the early church, "so long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but have all things in common."[18]

Wesley went so far as to advocate that some Methodists hold their property in common.[19] Wesley's objective was to bring the Methodists as close as possible to the practices of primitive Christianity. The evidence for this position is clear. Among the rules set down for the Select Societies by the first Conference (1744) was the following: "Every member, till we can have all things in common, will bring once a week, *bona fide*, all he can toward a common stock."[20] There was, apparently, a good deal of opposition. One Richard Viney reported in his diary for February 22, 1744, that Wesley "told me of an intention he and some few have of beginning a Community of goods, but on a plan which I told him I doubted could not [sic] succeed."[21] According to Viney the plan would be carried out on the formula familiar to socialist thought, from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. The fact that Wesley did not seriously promote this scheme after 1744 suggests that the opposition was great enough to dissuade him. The three rules of gain, save, give, constitute a compromise (developed after 1744) between what Wesley considered as ideal and what was apparently possible.

---

[15] *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 376 (Sermon xxviii).

[16] This may be called the Wesleyan economic formula. For Wesley's exposition of this formula, see *Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 127-134 (Sermon l). This sermon was published in 1760 in volume iv of the so-called "Standard Sermons."

[17] *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 376 (Sermon xxviii).

[18] *Explanatory Notes*, p. 409, note on Acts 4:32. See note on Acts 4:35.

[19] Richard M. Cameron, *Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 69.

The foregoing discussion does not constitute an attempt to argue that Wesley was an early day English socialist. From about 1744 on he did not attempt to force Methodists into the kind of framework he had once contemplated. It does illustrate the depth to which Wesley thought the principle of the stewardship of property should go. It is impossible to interpret the Wesleyan position as a defense of what has been called the "Protestant Ethic." Max Weber, for example, wrongly contends that Wesley's theology and ethics simply fostered the notion that the number of possessions one has demonstrates the extent to which God's grace has fallen upon that individual.[22] But more than once Wesley denied the "duty of getting a good estate."[23] The interpretation of Wesley that states that the "presence of success indicates a state of moral soundness,"[24] is impossible to maintain in the context of the totality of his writings.[25] In a sense Wesley represents an exception to the general "Protestant Ethic" of Calvinism which influenced the eighteenth century so greatly. Tawney quite rightly asserts the following:

---

[20] The Bennet Minutes of the first Conference, as quoted by Cameron, *ibid.*, p. 70.

[21] As quoted by R. F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England, 1800-1850* (London: The Epworth Press, 1937), p. 203.

> Conspicuous exceptions like Law, who reasserted with matchless power the idea that Christianity implies a distinctive way of life, or protests like Wesley's sermon on The Use of Money, merely heighten the impression of a general acquiescence in the conventional ethics.[26]

The point of the foregoing is to demonstrate that Wesley did not accept the view that property was to be held as some sacred right which was inviolable, but rather that the right to property was bound to its proper use. His original notion that property is a gift of God, his contentions about the purposive use of property, his notions concerning the ideal organization of property, his rejection of what has been called the "Protestant Ethic" -- all buttress this interpretation. His concern with property led him to protest the monopolization of farms[27] and at one point to advocate land redistribution by "letting no farms of above a hundred pounds a year."[28] He was, apparently, willing to go as far as government regulation of property when the situation demanded it.

---

[22] Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 142-143.

[23] Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 285 (August, 1740).

[24] Kathleen Walker MacArthur, The Economic Ethics of John Wesley (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 123.

[25] See, for example, the following rejections of such a position: Letters, Vol. III, p. 122 (to Sir James Lowther, October, 1754); Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 71 (August, 1761), p. 367 (June, 1769), Vol. IV, p. 180 (May, 1780); Works, Vol. VII, p. 1 (Sermon lxxxvii).

[26] R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: New American Library, 1961, first published, 1926), p. 161.

Equality

Among those concepts related to political thought is the idea of equality. As was noted in some detail in the last chapter there was, in Wesleyan thought, an equality of evil, an equality of grace, and an equality of freedom. Moreover, the concept of love that Wesley held also influenced his idea of equality. He was fond of quoting from Prior's Solomon (ii, 242) the following line: "Love, like death, makes all distinctions void."[29] For Wesley, no higher view of equality could conceivably be taken, for this was the sum total of all ethical standards. Whoever follows the path of Christian love is, said Wesley, "my 'brother and sister and mother.'"[30] The theological and ethical foundations of Wesley's view of equality were part of Methodism's contribution to democracy, "this assumption of the worth of anybody's soul."[31] The Negro and the poor were taught that they were equally valuable in the sight of God.

---

[27] Letters, Vol. V, p. 352 (to the Editor of "Lloyd's Evening Post," December, 1772); apparently he is referring to the enclosure movement.

[28] Ibid., p. 354.

[29] Letters, Vol. V, p. 127 (to Mrs. Woodhouse, February, 1769).

Racial Equality

The problem of racial equality, especially that of the Negro, became an issue in eighteenth century England because of the pressure which arose to do away with the slave trade. While in Georgia Wesley became concerned over the plight of the Negro in America.[32] It was not until later in his life, however, that he became involved in the abolition movement in England.[33]

---

[30] Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 61 (to Samuel Sparrow, December, 1775). Outside the Christian revelation there was, for Wesley, an equality of evil; inside, an equality of love, the mind that was in Christ: "And without this [the mind that was in Christ], how little does it avail, whether they are called Protestants or Papists!" Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 493 (May, 1773).

[31] Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 41. See also, Oscar Sherwin, John Wesley: Friend of the People (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961), p. 42; and MacArthur, op. cit., p. 50.

[32] Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 40 (September, 1736), p. 48 (April, 1737).

[33] The abolition movement was fostered by the establishment of the Abolition Committee in the last third of the eighteenth century. Its leading figures were Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) and Granville Sharp (1735-1813). Both Clarkson and Sharp were early advocates of abilition and were involved in other reform causes as well. It was Sharp who defended James Somersett and won the famous Somersett decision in 1772. See J. O. Thorne (ed.), Chamber's Biographical Dictionary (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 282, 1166. Wesley had a rather close association with both men. Letters, Vol. VIII, p. 6 (to Thomas Clarkson, August, 1787); pp. 275-276 (to Samuel Hoare, August, 1787); and p. 17 (to Granville Sharp, October, 1787).

In addition to the theological and ethical elements which comprised Wesley's concept of racial equality there was an anthropological argument. With the latter Wesley attempted to demonstrate that the Negro was no worse than the European. Such a position was, of course, developed within the framework of Wesley's deep-rooted pessimism concerning human nature.[34] This pessimism obviates any serious consideration of Edwards' charge that Wesley was imbibing in the spirit of the time and seeking to describe the "noble savage."[35] Wesley does, perhaps, overdraw his caricature of the Negro's idyllic life in Africa, though it should be remembered that the tract in which he discusses the slave question most extensively -- Thoughts upon Slavery -- was written first as propaganda against the slave trade and only secondarily as a scholarly profile of the Negro.

Among other things, Wesley called for liberty for the Negro:

> Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsions. Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably do unto every one as you would he should do unto you.[36]

Wesley went so far as to say that any rebellion of slaves against their masters was simply the assertion of their "native liberty, which they have as much right to as to the air they breathe."[37]

---

[34] Thoughts upon Slavery, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 64-65.

[35] Edwards, op. cit., p. 116; see also, pp. 102-103.

[36] Thoughts upon Slavery, p. 78. [37] Ibid., p. 68.

8

Related to the idea of change, he went on to say that even though slavery was established by law, "notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still."[38] It is apparent that these sentiments were not designed to make the established order rest easily.

In the light of the foregoing, Wesley maintained that it was improper to blame the Negro for any possible bestiality he might possess under slavery. Wesley concluded that their "stupidity [ignorance, bestiality, etc.], therefore, in our plantations is not natural; otherwise than it is the natural effect of their condition."[39] Wesley noted that the slave holders had made and kept the Negroes "stupid and wicked, by cutting them off from all opportunities of improving either in knowledge or virtue."[40] Thus, said Wesley, if the Negroes in America were in any way inferior to the whites, it was due to the negative socialization process through which they had been made to pass.

Social Equality

Just as Wesley manifested a spirit of equality with regard to race, he also exemplified the same spirit with respect to the class structure of England. As a general statement it may be said that Wesley loved the poor and pitied the rich, though as a bald statement it is too broad to have much meaning. He held a clear picture of the class structure of England in the eighteenth century,[41] but with reference to the working classes he could be as sentimental as Marx: "How good is it for fallen man to earn his food by the sweat of his brow! Everywhere we find the labouring part of mankind the readiest to receive the Gospel."[42] Wesley stoutly maintained that the rich were no better than the poor and that all were naturally corrupt.[43] That Wesley's egalitarian spirit influenced the upper classes there can be no doubt. In an oft quoted passage from the Duchess of Buckingham to Lady Huntington, the Duchess remarked:

---

[38] Ibid., p. 68. [39] Ibid., p. 74. [40] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

> It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.[44]

The Duchess charged Wesley with "perpetually endeavoring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions."[45] It is true that

---

[41] Original Sin, Works, Vol. IX, pp. 223-230.

[42] Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 445 (October, 1771).

[43] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 411 (January, 1743).

[44] This oft quoted passage is from a letter of the Duchess of Buckingham to the Countess of Huntington. In all later books, however, the letter is quoted from old biographies of the Countess of Huntington. The passage occurs, for example, in H. Richard Niebuhr, pp. 61-62; and in V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), pp. 120-121. Most biographies which deal even superficially with Wesley's social thought quote this. It is also interesting to note that the Duke of Buckingham, this woman's husband, had been the patron of Wesley's father, and John had known the Duchess' son. As another source for the quotation, see Helen C. Knight, Lady Huntington and Her Friends (New York: The American Tract Society, 1853), p. 18.

[45] Ibid.

Wesley "committed that offense which members of the privileged classes so often find unpardonable -- he would not remain true to the attitude expectations of his own class."[46] It certainly does not seem too far out of line to suggest that Wesley was imbued with a thorough-going (though partly non-political) egalitarian spirit. It has been suggested that it

> . . . was no slight social service, no small contribution to the forces which would one day create the public opinion of England, to have Wesley going up and down the land for sixty years on the assumption that the people to whom he spoke were worthy of the best he could give them.[47]

It has been said that social conditions can be so bad that there is virtually no chance for "salvation." Wesley, however, "found enough moral and spiritual responsiveness [among the poor] to call forth all his energies in optimistic effort."[48] In addition, though a dull and repressed proletariat may resent political exclusion, such resentment is inarticulate. On the other hand, as Edwards contends, "an enlightened proletariat demands its rights with no uncertain voice, and its enlightenment vindicates its claim."[49] Wesley, in fact, "helped to prepare people for the day when they would at last come into their own."[50] The remedy in such a situation is to instill a feeling of personal worth into the lower classes, to develop the "high ideals of human worth within the so-called less-privileged classes."[51] One of the strengths of Wesleyanism as a social power lay in the fact that it took account of the masses at a time when no other body seemed to care and the "Methodists and Evangelicals working for a common end . . . helped to break down class barriers and bridge the ever-widening gulf between commoners and aristocrats."[52] In addition, "what Methodism did by its insistence on the value of human personality was to offer a powerful argument against the exploitation of the people. This was bound to have social and political repercussions."[53] Somewhat over-enthusiastically Watkins has claimed that the "Wesleyan Revival became the greatest social force in the modern period of history because, as has nothing else, it lifted the common people out of their feeling of inferiority."[54] In a sense, Wesley trained a generation of citizens "in the duties and responsibilities that fall upon citizens and upon men entrusted with leadership."[55]

---

[46] McConnell, op. cit., p. 240. [47] Ibid., p. 236.

[48] Ibid., p. 243. [49] Edwards, op. cit., p. 52.

[50] Ibid. [51] McConnell, op. cit., p. 241.

Justice

Implicit in much of the discussion concerning equality in Wesleyan thought is the idea that people should behave in an humane manner toward one another. This constitutes the human side of the problem of justice already analyzed partially in Chapters II and III. Traditionally the concept of justice has been closely related to the idea of equality.[56] In general, it may be said that justice constitutes the constant and perpetual disposition to render every man his due. Wesley adopted this conception of justice but in order to complete an analysis of his idea it is necessary to understand what is meant by "due" in the structure of justice. It is clear from several of the quotations offered earlier that Wesley thought both liberty and equality were due every man. Illustrative of this is Wesley's plea on behalf of the slaves that every man be given the liberty to which he is due.[57] This is related to Wesley's view that God's highest creation -- man -- was entitled to respect because he was God's creation. After presenting a description of the depravity forced upon the Negro because of slavery Wesley asked, "did the Creator intend that the noblest creatures [human beings] in the visible world should live such a life as this?"[58] It may be inferred from this that Wesley did feel rather strongly that liberty and equality were at least two of the objects of justice.

---

[52] Edwards, op. cit., pp. 95-96. [53] Ibid., p. 191.

[54] William T. Watkins, "Wesley's Message to His Own Age," in Methodism, ed. William K. Anderson (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947), p. 22.

[55] MacArthur, op. cit., p. 129.

---

[56] See, for example, Henry Campbell Black, Black's Law Dictionary (4th ed.; St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1951), p. 1002: Justice "consists in rendering to every man the exact measure of his dues, without regard to his personal worth or merits, i.e., placing all men on an equality."

[57] Thoughts upon Slavery, p. 78.

[58] Ibid., p. 68.

In addition to the more generalized concept of justice put forth above, Wesley also adopted a theory of distributive justice. While he was not concerned with the more systematic conception of distributive justice advanced by Aristotle,[59] he did, nevertheless, adopt the general idea of rewards being distributed according to merit. This was translated in the political system to mean that criminals, for example, should receive punishments which are related to the kind of crime committed. In an era of barbaric punishments for small offenses, Wesley thought that punishments ought to be in line with crimes committed.[60] He maintained that there was neither justice nor mercy nor common sense applied in cases in which the punishment was unrelated to the offense or in which a man was tried for a greater crime than he actually committed. Such actions, he said, resulted in "sucking the blood of a poor, beggared prisoner."[61] In this, as in some of his other reform work, Wesley contributed most by giving publicity to the problems which existed and by giving support, both moral and financial, to those who did more systematic work. It was the sum total of all these endeavors which resulted in more humane legislation concerning penal administration in England.

---

[59] Aristotle, The Ethics, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), pp. 146-147. Aristotle develops the idea of rewards distributed according to merit on the basis of a geometric proportion. This, he felt, would maintain an essential mean and equality, both of which were necessary characteristics of justice.

[60] The most significant critic of the penal system in England of the eighteenth century was John Howard. Wesley and Howard were close and Howard acknowledged the "inspiration of Wesley's example." (Sherwin, p. 150.) Wesley, in turn, thought that Howard was "one of the greatest men in Europe." (Journal, Works, Vol. IV, p. 385 [June, 1787].) Ample illustrations of the barbaric criminal justice of England may be found in Howard's The State of the Prisons (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1929, first published, 1777).

[61] Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 65 (July, 1761).

While Wesley himself did not give a systematic exposition to his ideas concerning justice, and while they were not particularly original, it must be admitted that he did have a rather clear idea of the purpose and function of justice (notwithstanding Richard Niebuhr's comments to the contrary.) Underlying the concept of justice was the notion of Christian love. The relation of justice to love in the context of his theology of God has already been discussed. Justice was possible because God first loved man. The human reciprocal of this, however, was that because God loved man man could also love both God and man. Presumably since perfect love could only come under the Christian dispensation, then perfect justice could also come only under that same dispensation. If Aristotle's dictum that equality is a necessary prerequisite of justice be true, it is possible to say that Wesley also shared this view, though on non-Aristotelean grounds. For Wesley both equality and justice arose, in some measure, out of love and this apparently led Wesley to adopt the compatible ideas of equality and justice which he held.

Forms of Government

In analyzing Wesley's political thought it is necessary to inquire into the form of government he deemed best. This aspect of his political thought is important in this chapter for it is directly related to his theology of man. It is manifestly clear that Wesley did not believe that it was necessary for men to be enfranchised to have freedom. In this position he rather pointedly rejected the concept of one-man-one-vote. In denying this he failed to project his concepts of liberty and equality to their conclusions.

As far as Wesley was concerned, the vast majority of people were really unfit to govern.[62] This was due to the operation of original sin. This attribute cut across class boundaries, however. Those best fit to govern, he thought, were those who were "real" Christians, regardless of social class. On the other hand, Wesley was sufficiently realistic to recognize that not all men in government were among the saved. Wesley constantly inveighed against corruption in government and politics and was critical of violations of justice. In other words, his ethical critiques of politics constituted something of a substitute for the extension of the franchise as a means of protecting the rights of men against government. Also, he thought that the law should be applied equally, irrespective of an individual's position or social class. In lieu of the "saved" man, and in addition to the equal application of the law, Wesley thought that experience and education were the next best assurance of good governmental officials. Although this, in itself, has some non-democratic tendencies it must be recognized that Wesley was an advocate of popular education (see sec. on education). In any event, Wesley's rejection of the one-man-one-vote principle represents a rather unusual paradox when it is compared with his democratic theology and his relatively democratic social theories. A further paradox exists when it is remembered that Wesley exerted, in general, a liberalizing influence on the English political system in the eighteenth century.[63] Wesley thought that the several functions of government -- the preservation of order, liberty, and justice -- were best served in the following manner:

---

[62] Letters, Vol. I, p. 223 (to Mr. Verelst, November, 1736); Vol. V, pp. 371, 375 (to a Friend, December, 1768).

> The greater share the people have in the government the less liberty, either civil or religious, does the nation in general enjoy. Accordingly, there is most liberty of all, civil and religious, under a limited monarchy; there is usually less under an aristocracy, and least of all under a democracy.[64]

Although it is often said that Wesley was born a Tory and remained a Tory for the rest of his life, as has been suggested previously, this view is much too simplistic. Many of the ideas analyzed earlier were inconsistent with Tory views. While it is true that Wesley's political socialization contributed much to his political thought, his ideas are not easily described as simply

---

[63] Leslie Lipson, "The Two Party System in British Politics," American Political Science Review, XLVII, No. 2 (June, 1953), as reprinted in Roy C. Macridis and Bernard E. Brown (eds.), Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1961), p. 207.

[64] Some Observations on Liberty, Works, Vol. XI, p. 105.

"Tory." It should be remembered, too, that his father, Samuel, was a moderate supporter of the Revolution Settlement and a strong Tory while his mother, Susanna, was a virtual Jacobite.[65] This family influence was partially responsible for Wesley's attitude toward the forms of government though all that he said cannot be laid at this particular doorstep. For more than anything else, Wesley's family influenced his mode of expression to a greater extent that it influenced the structure of his ideas. His very enthusiasm concerning the Revolution Settlement stands in contrast to the position of his mother.

Representation and Parliamentary Reform

For Wesley the terms "democratic" and "republican" were virtually synonomous. Both terms had an anti-monarchical quality, both directly related government to the people, and both tended to be related to one another by others during the period. In his rejection of the theories of government which these terms implied he was at home with the mood of complacent conservatism of his age.[66] Although there were some exceptions (and these increased in frequency toward the latter part of the eighteenth century) the English between 1689 and the second half of the eighteenth century were not prone to rate republicanism very highly. Wesley's support of the English monarchy was similar to the more general temper of his times, but this did not constitute a general approval of all monarchies. When Wesley praised monarchy he used this term to designate specifically the institution in England as established by the Revolution of 1689, not the despotisms of France or Germany. Wesley's attitudes with regard to the form that government should take manifested themselves in the particular problems of representation and parliamentary reform. Even though on two or three occasions he criticized the fact that there was an overt disproportion in some districts, by and large he did not favor the "one-man-one-vote" formula in apportioning Parliament.[67] It is necessary to agree with Edwards that the few occasions on which he criticized malapportionment were but "half-hearted protests against the fixed opinions and the settled attitude of a lifetime."[68] One or two other characteristics of

---

[65] Shortly before John Wesley's birth an interesting episode took place which substantiates the strong feelings of both Samuel and Susanna. Samuel noticed that his wife omitted the "Amen" to the prayer for King William III. Samuel called Susanna to his study and asked why. Susanna did not answer promptly and Samuel knelt down and vowed he would not touch her again until she had begged God's forgiveness. Susanna, loyal to the Stuarts, even after the death of William and the accession of Anne to the throne, would not give in. Though the problem was finally settled, the episode demonstrates the strong opinions held by Wesley's parents. (V. H. H. Green, pp. 49-50.) J. Brazier Green, John Wesley and William Law (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), p. 19, suggests, following Hallam, that a High Churchman of the period was one who had great pretensions to a sacerdotal power (both spiritual and temporal), by a rejection of toleration, and finally, by an adherence to Tory principles in the state. This describes Samuel's viewpoint relatively well.

---

[66] Basil Wiley, _The Eighteenth Century Background_ (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1961), p. 48.

[67] _Journal_, _Works_, Vol. II, p. 317 (October, 1754); p. 339 (August, 1755).

[68] Edwards, _op_. _cit_., p. 52.

Wesley's behavior, notably his own conscientious record of voting and his admonitions to keep elections honest (see, for example, A Word to a Freeholder), may be interpreted in a manner similar to the foregoing. He urged Methodists who were enfranchised to vote (usually for someone favored by Wesley), but this was simply behavior within the context of an established system. Wesley's attitude toward representation and parliamentary reform can be further explored in relation to his attitudes towards the Wilkes affair and aspects of the American Revolution.

Wilkes and Representation

During the late 1760's and the 1770's the Wilkes affair at times eclipsed the problems with America. The former arose out of an incident -- the Middlesex election case -- which was not directly related to the American crisis. Since both constituted protest at one time or another against Parliament, and raised important questions concerning representation, there was, at times, an identification of the two problems.[69] In 1767, Wilkes, a member of Parliament, was condemned by that body for a scurrilous attack he made on Lord Weymouth. He had already been expelled from Parliament in 1764 because of his publishing ventures. In 1768, after losing an election in London, he was returned to Parliament from Middlesex. Wilkes was re-elected by Middlesex four times and disallowed his seat every time. Commons declared him ineligible for membership in the House, but by 1774 he was back. During this period it was his writing and publishing which caused trouble for Wilkes; some of it was impolitic, if not downright libelous. Through government prosecution and persecution Wilkes became a hero for those elements who wished to popularize the government and expand the franchise in England. The Burkean concept of "virtual" representation -- which tended to reduce the place of public opinion in the legislative process -- was opposed in spirit by the popular furor caused by the Wilkes affair.[70]

---

[69] Ian H. Christie, Wilkes, Wyvill and Reform (London: Macmillan and Co., 1962), pp. 222-223.

Wesley's major concern during this period was with the American War and the possibilities of invasion of England (by France or Spain) and revolution there. The Wilkes affair, however, caused rioting and a good deal of rather pointed criticism of the government. Because of this, and because Wesley himself was unconvinced about the utility of expanding the franchise, he produced some literature defending Parliament for disallowing Wilkes, and condemning Wilkes and those who used him as a rallying point. If Wesley held any one view of representation, it is probably the idea of "virtual" representation. This is demonstrated by his unconcern for expansion of the franchise, by his attitude toward Wilkes, and later, by his attitude toward aspects of the American revolution. Wesley maintained, with regard to Wilkes, that the Parliament had the right to exclude whom they thought necessary (as does every legislative body, including the Congress of the United States). Unreasonable use of any such mechanism can, of course, negate the whole idea of representation. Since, however, Wesley rejected the idea that "the people" have a "right" to send elected representatives to Parliament, this did not create a major problem for him. The people had the "right" to be represented, but he thought they were adequately represented by the aristocratic Parliament then in power. Further, Wesley refused to admit that Wilkes and his followers might have a point in advocating Parliamentary reform and he refused to admit the implications of his theory of liberty in such a situation.

---

[70] Kenneth Mackenzie, The English Parliament (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 96.

The American War and Representation

Like Wesley's ideas concerning Wilkes, his view of the American Revolution contains some important insights into his theories of representation. In June or August of 1775 Wesley wrote what was to become his most famous and controversial tract concerning the Revolution, *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies*.[71] The bulk of the *Calm Address* is given over to a consideration of the question,

---

[71] Curnock argues (*Journal*, Vol. VI, pp. 66-67), on the basis of a good deal of supporting evidence, that Wesley wrote the *Calm Address* in June, 1775, the same time that he wrote letters concerning the American conflict to Lord North and the Earl of Dartmouth. Curnock was not, however, aware of a second letter to the Earl of Dartmouth in August and his dates may be slightly off. There is a problem in that these letters are inconsistent in their philosophy with the *Calm Address*. See *Letters*, Vol. VI, pp. 156-159 (to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State to the Colonies, June 14, 1775); pp. 160ff. (to Lord North, First Lord of the Treasury, June 15, 1775); p. 176 (to the Earl of Dartmouth, August 23, 1775). The differences between the letters can be most adequately accounted for by the fact

"Has the English Parliament a right to tax the American colonies?" Arguing on the basis of law, Wesley came to the conclusion that the Parliament did have such a right.[72] It is on this point that Wesley diverged most from earlier works.[73] To the objection that Parliament had no right to tax without representation Wesley answered that this was ridiculous, for everyone admitted the right to tax Englishmen in England where most of the people could not vote. Wesley took particular note of one objection of the Americans to Parliament, the proposition that taxation without representation was slavery. This bothered Wesley immensely and he charged the

---

that Wesley was most concerned with peace. In the letters he urged moderation on the government while in the Calm Address he tried to argue to the Americans that their position was untenable. Both approaches failed. Even though Wesley himself said in the preface of the so-called second edition (see Richard Green, The Works of John and Charles Wesley, a Bibliography [London: C. H. Kelly, for the Author, 1896], p. 189, no. 305) that his mind concerning the legality of the American conflict was changed after reading Johnson's Taxation no Tyranny, the Calm Address, in general, still puts forward many of the views which he had used from 1768 on, with regard to English liberty and problems arising over the Wilkes affair. See A Calm Address to Our American Colonies, Works, Vol. XI, p. 80. As will be discussed, critics and friends of Wesley alike, both in the eighteenth century and the twentieth, have assumed that the Calm Address did, in fact, constitute a drastic change in his position, but it was not that drastic, though it was written at an inopportune time. The Calm Address evinced a severe attack on Wesley including such works as that by Augustus Toplady, An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feathered (London: Printed for John French, in the Poultry; Mary Lewis, Pater-Noster-Row; and the Booksellers at the Royal Exchange, 1775).

[72] Calm Address, pp. 80-82.

[73] Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs, Works, Vol. XI, p. 24, and Letters, Vol. V, p. 379 (to a Friend, December, 1768).

Americans with hypocrisy and reminded them of the highly developed Negro slave system. Like Burke[74] Wesley rejected the necessity of numerical or territorial representation. The rejection was not as systematic as was Burke's, but certainly the generalized notion of virtual representation is suggested by much of what is said above. Thus, Wesley's argument was that in the first place taxation without representation was not slavery at all, and in the second place, in some sense, even the British in America were represented in Parliament.

Wesley's Toryism

It is possible, at this point, to come to a preliminary evaluation of Wesley's Toryism. It must be stressed that his Toryism must also be evaluated partially in the next chapter in relation to his ideas concerning the church, as well. It is not possible, at this point, to conclude with Edwards that Wesley's "Toryism remained unchanged, and his Churchmanship was greatly modified in the course of his life."[75] There is little doubt that when Wesley entered Oxford he still possessed many of the political ideas inculated by his parents. It is also true, however, that Wesley developed political ideas that went beyond those of his parents and differed from them.[76] As has been suggested in this chapter and in the one preceding, some of Wesley's ideas approached most closely those elaborated by Whigs, such as his ecstacy over constitutional monarchy, but not over monarchy in general. Others of his views have considerably more correspondence to Tory ideas, such as his concept of the origin of power and his denial of the need to extend the franchise. Many of his ideas occupy overlapping ground, or are ideas not covered by either position. His concepts regarding order and change illustrate the former while his notions concerning property and equality suggest the latter. Though Wesley may properly be termed Lockean in some of his political theory, he diverges most from Locke and from the Whig position on the matter of representation and, therefore, on the problem of consent. Since Wesley started with the idea that government was founded not on consent but on God, he would necessarily, it would seem, deprecate the importance of representation.[77] All of these ideas and attitudes taken together add up to the conclusion that while Wesley may be described generally as a Tory he was not an ideologue. Perhaps what should be said is that Wesley's "Toryism" is representative of the confused and changing state of political party ideologies in the eighteenth century.

---

[74] On Burke, see the following: Howard Becker and Harry Elmer Barnes, Social Thought from Lore to Science (3rd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1961), Vol. II, pp. 542-544; Andrew Hacker, Political Theory (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961) pp. 341-381; George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory (3rd ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 610-611; Francis Canavan, in Strauss and Cropsey, op. cit., pp. 601-620; and Lawrence C. Wanless, History of Political Thought (New York: Appleton- Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), pp. 302-303.

[75] Edwards op.cit., p. 13.

---

[76] On this, see Edwards, _Ibid_., pp. 16-17, and V. H. H. Green _op_. _cit_., p. 60. Initially, too, the political atmosphere of Oxford would tend to reinforce what he had learned at home. It is true that modes of thought from this period remained both in his theological and political views, but many of the evaluations of Wesley which maintain that he did not change his political thought are founded on how Wesley phrased a problem rather than what, precisely, he said or did about a problem.

[77] On Locke and consent see Harold J. Laski, _Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham_ (London: Home University Library, 1949), p. 48.

Functions of the State

A discussion of Wesley's political thought as it relates to his concept of man cannot be ended without mentioning several problems which are, in the twentieth century, considered appropriate functions of the state. Among such problems are various economic relations, education, health and medicine, and international relations. For Wesley these were not only political or semi-political problems, but moral problems as well. While the eighteenth century lacked the spiritual idealism of the seventeenth, there were a number of people, notably Wesley and Law, who maintained many of the virtues of the past. Moreover, secular theorists, such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and Adam Smith, "were thinking not less for politics than for ethics."[78] In some sense the dictum of Laski concerning the latter group applies to Wesley as well: "Its value is its denial of politics as a science distinct from other human relations."[79]

---

[78] Laski, Political Thought, p. 12.

[79] Ibid.

Economic Relations

An aspect of Wesley's concern for economic relations -- the problem of property -- has already been discussed. As was noted earlier, the concept of property and its related ideas were firmly rooted in his theology and ethics. Property could never become an unalienable right to be defended, at all cost, by the state. As a result of his theological and ethical analysis of property and also as a result of his more general ethic of love, Wesley developed what may best be described as a critique (rather than a philosophy) of political economy. His concerns ran the gamut of problems which arose in the eighteenth century. With regard to smuggling, for example, Wesley pointed out that the smuggler not only stole from the King, but indirectly from the people, for "the more the King's duties are diminished, the more the taxes shall be increased. And these lie upon us all; they are the burden, not of some, but of all the people of England."[80] Smuggling was a problem in part due to the high import duties demanded by the government largely as a result of almost continuous wars during the century. Not only import duties, but taxes in general, were high. Because of the problems confronting England Wesley recognized that "new taxes must undoubtedly be imposed; but may not more money be produced by old ones?" This question was asked of Pitt a year after Pitt became Prime Minister. Two important parts of the problem, according to

---

[80] Word to a Smuggler, Works, Vol. XI, p. 175. In 1784 Pitt estimated that of thirteen million pounds of tea consumed, only five and one half million paid duty. (Sherwin, op. cit., p. 169).

Wesley, were the unequal collection of land taxes and preferential collection of other taxes.[81]

Other problems confronting Wesley and the eighteenth century were poverty and unemployment. Poverty was regarded as a stigma and the prevailing attitude was that it was caused by laziness or by the will of God. Rarely did men in the eighteenth century see poverty and unemployment as a result of social inequity. In this sense it may perhaps be said that "Wesley discovered the poor,"[82] for he was able to see some social sources of poverty apart from the individual's responsibility. At the very least he recognized that unemployment was not normally the result of indolence since he claimed that the belief that indolence was the problem was "wickedly, devilishly false."[83] In point of fact, people were in want "through scarcity of business."[84] The solution, thought Wesley, was to reduce prices thus permitting most people to buy more widely and thereby creating a demand for more goods. This would, of course, result in a greater rate of production thus necessitating higher employment.[85] In order to reduce prices Wesley thought that specific curbs could be placed on particular items by the government.

---

[81] Letters, Vol. VII, pp. 234-235 (to William Pitt, September, 1784).

[82] Edwards, op. cit., p. 148.

[83] Journal, Works, Vol. II, pp. 269-270 (February, 1753).

[84] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 482 (November, 1772).

[85] Letters, Vol. V, pp. 353-354 (to the Editor of "Lloyd's Evening Post," December 8, 1772). This letter was later published as a separate pamphlet entitled Thoughts on the Present Scarcity

Although much of the foregoing is a commentary on what Wesley thought the position of the government should be with regard to the economy, a further note is necessary. Wesley more than once cited the need for governmental control and planning in the economy to alleviate distressed conditions. This is illustrated above and elsewhere in this chapter. Most significant in this regard was the note of surprise evinced by a book he read in 1776: the book contained "some observations which I never saw before . . . that to petition Parliament to alter [prices and fix money policies] is to put them upon (sic) impossibilities, and can answer no end but that of inflaming the people against their governors."[86] Though Wesley did not stipulate what book he read, this position would be typical of the laissez-faire philosophy of Adam Smith or Adam Ferguson. Ferguson's An Essay on the History of Civil Society appeared in 1766 while Smith's Wealth of Nations was published ten years later. In the realm of economics both Ferguson and Smith advocated governmental non-intervention.[87] From what has been said previously, it would seem that Edwards' charge that nowhere in Wesley's works is

---

of Provisions, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 53-59. More than once Wesley wrote members of the government advocating governmental intervention in order to relieve depressed economic circumstances. See, for example, Letters, Vol. VI, pp. 175-176 (to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies, August, 1775).

[86] Journal, Works, Vol. IV, pp. 83-84 (August, 1776).

[87] John Snell, "The Political Thought of Adam Ferguson," The Municipal University of Wichita Bulletin, reprint, no. 21 (May, 1950), pp. 10-11.

there "an appeal for collectivist legislation,"[88] is perhaps too strong. If Wesley did not call for the welfare state he at least advocated governmental supervision in times of stress and crisis. Taken together, Wesley's concept of property and some of his specific programmatic suggestions remain inconsistent with the laissez-faire philosophy that was being developed during the latter part of his life. Part of Wesley's concept of liberty (the "right" to be left alone) was perhaps more in sympathy with the laissez-faire spirit than were his economic ideas.

Education

Much of the ambivalence in Wesley's thought between his non-democratic (or anti-democratic) ideas concerning government and his democratizing ideas (such as equality) is exemplified in such areas as education. While Wesley did not suggest (explicitly at least) the establishment of universal free public education in the sense that twentieth century America has it, he did, nonetheless, advocate mass education in an age when most were illiterate.[89] The kind of education Wesley proposed was designed to make fully educated Christians rather than more skilled workers. With all the implications the term "Christian" had for Wesley, as well as the curriculum he advocated, the result would certainly have been to make the student think independently.[90]

---

[88] Edwards, op. cit., p.184. For MacArthur's evaluation of Wesley's economic position see op. cit., p. 111-112. In commenting on Wesley's economic views J. A. Faulkner, Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1918), p. 12, says: "It only touches the surface of a condition that needed severer remedies--remedies that none in England then proposed and few now propose."

[89] This contention is best supported in Wesley's backing of the Sunday School movement which was, in a rather literal sense, the beginning of mass education in Anglo-American society. It should be pointed out, too, that on the whole, Americans in the eighteenth century had a higher rate of literacy to begin with than did the people of England. In the Sunday Schools of the movement begun around 1780 by John Raikes, children were taught the fundamentals of reading

Wesley's philosophy of learning and of education arose out of the conditions of education of his day, out of the more rigorous schooling he had received at the hands of his mother and later at the Charterhouse and Oxford, out of his approach to religion, and finally, out of empirical philosophy. Wesley accepted the Lockean notion that "all our knowledge which we naturally have is originally

---

and writing. The Sunday Schools, as Wesley saw them, were not for the purpose of keeping the children of the disinherited docile, but rather, to teach them to read. Wesley saw in a church supported Sunday School system the possibility of widespread literacy. As Edwards points out (p. 139), if Sunday Schools were centers of instruction and learning for children of the disinherited classes, "then John Wesley must be reckoned as one of the leaders responsible for the growth of popular education." See Journal, Works, Vol. II, p. 317 (October, 1754); p. 400 (May, 1757); Vol. III, p. 266 (January, 1767); p. 270 (January, 1767); p. 294 (August, 1767); Letters, Vol. VII, p. 212 (to Arthur Keene, March, 1784); p. 213 (to Brian Bury Collins, March, 1784), for various aspects of Wesley's approach to education. See Sherwin, p. 143. For background on the development of English education in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see the following: John William Adamson, Pioneers of Modern Education (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905); William Boyd, The History of Western Education (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), pp. 239-329; R. Freeman Butts, A Cultural History of Western Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955), pp. 267-329; Elwood P. Cubberly, The History of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920), pp. 428-506; Frederick Eby, The Development of Modern Education (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), pp. 261-393.

[90] A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, Near Bristol, Works, Vol. XIII, p. 291.

derived from our senses."[91] This statement is premised upon the acceptance of the psychological model of the tabula rasa. The idea that knowledge is derived from sense perception can be applied not only to knowledge concerning the external world but to the acquisition of values as well. Notwithstanding the implication that values are (or might be) learned attributes, Wesley held that man's mind and soul were corrupted by original sin. Thus, according to Wesley, sin was not something that was learned--rather, it was an integral part of human nature. It should be apparent that the ideas of learning and original sin were not, therefore, wholly compatible. Yet at one point Wesley baldly remarks that even original sin might be wiped away through education (thus implying that original sin was learned and also negating the necessity for justification by faith).[92] On the whole, however, (and much more systematically) Wesley thought education could help control, but not erase, original sin. The import of this discussion illustrates the importance Wesley did attach to the educational enterprise.

Health and Medicine

In addition to having an influence upon the growth of popular education, Wesley also fostered the idea of socially responsible medical care. George Newman, in Health and Social Evolution, argues that Wesley's call for medical and health reforms was one of the major factors leading to a consciousness of the problems of health and the social responsibilities involved. Out of "Wesley's work came a widespread health movement, personal and communal and covering the country with its benefits."[93] This aspect of Wesley's work was based, as Newman correctly points out, on Wesley's ethic and theology: "He imposed upon the individual a personal social responsibility."[94] Wesley's concern came at a time when "no branch of study was more bound by ancient tradition than that of the art of healing."[95]

---

[91] Works, Vol. VII, p. 90 (Sermon xcv).

[92] Ibid., p. 231 (Sermon cx).

The importance of Wesley's work with health and medicine to political thought lies not so much with what he thought the responsibility of the government was, but rather in the concept that good medical facilities ought to be available to all people. Before governments enter into fields such as education or medicine it is usually necessary to demonstrate a popular need. Wesley's efforts helped expand the understanding of that need. It is impossible to say that Wesley thought, or did not think, that the government, _per se_, had specific responsibilities for health. Except for isolated comments concerning the general need for cleanliness in cities -- which he thought to be the responsibility of city government -- he simply did not address himself one way or the other to the problem of "public" (that is, governmentally supported) medicine. It is possible, however, to demonstrate the extent to which Wesley thought he had a personal social responsibility. When specifically asked why he published his two most extensive works on medicine and science as it is related to medicine (*Primitive Physic* and *The Desideratum*), Wesley answered: "[I am compelled] to do as much good as I can."[96] He thought that God's grace worked dynamically in human history through works of mercy as well as works of piety.[97] By this he seems to have had care of the sick specifically in mind, and "the sick" included "all such as are in a state of affliction, whether of mind or body; and that, whether they are good or bad, whether they fear God or not."[98] Since man is a thinking, rational creature, there is little need for him to suffer from infirmities which may be remedied.[99]

---

[93] George Newman, _Health and Social Evolution_ (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), pp. 61-62.

[94] _Ibid._, p. 58.

[95] A. Wolf, _A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century_ (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952, first published, 1938), Vol. II, p. 479.

Wesley's concern for health and medicine was translated into practice within the Methodist Societies by the establishment of medical cooperatives. He opened three dispensaries where people could obtain both diagnosis and treatment, and was ready to give medical advice wherever he happened to be.[100] In his dispensaries

---

[96] *Letters*, Vol. IV, pp. 121,123 (to the editor of the "London Magazine," December, 1770).

[97] *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 119 (Sermon xcviii).

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[99] *Preface to Primitive Physic*, *Works*, Vol. XIV, p. 308.

[100] MacArthur, pp. 113-114. Wesley's own store of medical knowledge was extensive and his study of the healing arts began while he was in Oxford. See A. Wesley Hill, *John Wesley among the Physicians* (London: The Epworth Press, 1958).

Wesley first tried to administer the practice himself, "but afterwards he employed an apothecary and an experienced surgeon, resolving not to undertake complicated cases."[101] Important as Wesley's dispensaries were as precedents, of still greater importance was his education "program in the matter of health."[102] As educational devices Primitive Physic and The Desideratum were perhaps more useful than the actual suggestions they gave for the cure of disease. Related to this was Wesley's call, on occasion, for public responsibility for cleanliness. He claimed, for example, that Edinburgh smelled like a "common sewer." He called upon the city government and leading citizens of the city to clean it up and asked that a remedy be found.[103]

International Relations

A final problem to be considered in this chapter is the matter of Wesley's approach to international relations.

As with some other elements of Wesley's political thought, the problem of international relations was not explicitly analyzed in terms of any general theories. Rather, much of what Wesley thought concerning international relations must be inferred from comments he made on either broader or narrower problems (i.e., the nature of man, or the problem of war). By and large, on the basis of what has heretofore been said, Wesley thought that international relations constituted an arena for conflict. The source of conflict at the international level (as well as at other levels) lay in man's sinfulness. At several points Wesley maintained that war, as the maximization of conflict, was a result of original sin and was itself a symptom (or a sign of) the existence of original sin. Just as surely, however, in international conflict Wesley thought he sometimes saw the actions of God -- especially in situations where he thought injustice was being swept away by justifiable wrath. Moreover, he thought that international relations, in principle at least, like other human relations, should be conducted on the basis of Christian love. It must also be pointed out that certain kinds of social circumstances, such as the almost constant warfare between France and England in the eighteenth century, had an impact on Wesley's thinking.

---

[101] John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (3rd. ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 336. It should be pointed out that in his criticisms of current medical practices, such as bleeding, Wesley was ahead of his time. As an example of such criticism see Journal, Works, Vol. II, p. 360 (April, 1756); and Hill, op. cit., p. 61.

[102] Sherwin, op. cit., p. 134.

[103] Journal, Works, Vol. II, p. 54 (May, 1761).

One of the ideas which does arise in Wesley's thought concerning international relations revolves around the idea of expediency. Wesley thought that there might be a kind of moral expediency and a form of immoral expediency in international (and probably domestic) politics. The former is illustrated at one point in the American conflict when he advised Lord North and the Earl of Dartmouth to give in to the Americans at several points. In this he appealed to common sense with the implication that it really didn't matter to England one way or the other.[104] In this position of suggesting that it really wouldn't hurt to give in to the Americans Wesley was advocating a position very similar to the arguments from expediency used by Burke.[105] In other words, in areas where no fundamental issues were involved, Wesley would counsel expediency -- a moral expediency as it were.[106] Immoral expediency, on the other hand, consisted in the use of expediency to gain illegitimate ends, or in the use of means which were, in and of themselves, immoral (as, for example, would be the use of assassination in struggles for political power). An illegitimate end, for Wesley, would be the desire to gain wealth as an end in itself, or the desire for political power as an end in itself. This immoral expediency Wesley labeled "craft." Wesley's ideas at this point are illustrated with relation to his interpretation of Machiavelli. In The Prince Machiavelli attempted to set forth what was necessary to do in order to gain and maintain political power. In the first place Wesley thought that the acquisition of political power as a goal in itself was an invalid objective. In the second place he considered Machiavelli's suggestions as to how to gain power morally wrong as means. Wesley's final judgment concerning Machiavelli was somewhat intemperate: "if all the other doctrines of devils which have been committed to writing since letters were in the world were collected together in one volume, it would fall short of this."[107] "Craft," he said, "is an essential part of worldly prudence. This I detest and abhor."[108]

---

[104] Letters, Vol. VI, pp. 156-159 and pp. 160ff.

[105] Laski, Political Thought, pp. 175-182, on Burke.

[106] It must be remembered that especially with regard to the American question Wesley was not wholly consistent in this view. As will also be noted, however, once the American War commenced, Wesley thought England had a right to defend its position with regard to America. Here defense was the key.

The other idea in international relations with which Wesley was greatly concerned was the problem of war (and of course, its corollary, peace). Roland Bainton in his book, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace, suggests that "broadly speaking, three attitudes to war and peace were to appear in the Christian ethic: pacifism, the just war, and the crusade."[109] Among advocates of these three views the essential problem concerned the manner in which man's depravity was to be treated. The proponents of pacifism have commonly despaired of the world and have withdrawn from society, or from the political life (especially war). Those who recommended the just war have adopted the position that evil can be restrained by the coercive power of the state. Since the state is doing God's bidding by restraining evil, the church is, in turn, expected to support the state. Finally, the counsellors of the crusade have taken the view that the church (as the society of those who know the Truth) should seek to dominate the world -- by force, if necessary. It is clear that Wesley, though he detested the thought of war,[110] fell squarely within Bainton's second category. He thought that war was sometimes necessary, and even just, provided it was fought solely for defense. Moreover, he specifically denied the idea of the crusade, differing in this respect from stated British colonial policy.[111] Finally, it may be suggested, Wesley thought that the aggressiveness of the English (which he considered sinful) with respect to Africa, Asia, and America was among the chief causes of the unstable conditions in international politics in the 1770's. He contended that the expansionist policies of the British (in the name of commerce) were themselves evil. "What peace therefore can we expect, while these evils continue?" asked Wesley.[112]

---

[107] Journal, Works, Vol. I, pp. 44-45 (January, 1737). That Wesley actually held this view is further substantiated by a comparison he made between Machiavelli and Mandeville. It is clear that he interpreted Machiavelli in the manner described. See Journal, Works, Vol. II, p. 361 (April, 1756).

[108] Letters, Vol. IV, p. 367 (to Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, November, 1762).

[109] Roland H. Bainton, Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace (Nashville: The Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 14-15.

---

[110] Works, Vol. VII, p. 340 (Sermon cxxiii).

[111] See Klaus E. Knorr, British Colonial Theories, 1570-1850 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 28-32, for a discussion of the extent and meaning of this attitude. For a brief summary of Wesley's approach to war, and for illustrations of Methodist pacifism, see Cameron, op. cit., pp. 52-55, 89-94. Wesley often uttered statements substantiating the interpretation given here. Illustrative of this in terms of the concept of the just war are the following letters: Letters, Vol. II, pp. 40-41 (to the Mayor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, September, 1745); and pp. 41-42 (to his Brother Charles, September, 1745).

[112] A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain, Works, Vol. XI, p. 120.

Conclusion

In summary, it may be said that Wesley's political thought as related in this chapter is closely connected to his theology of man and to the ethics which arose out of that theology. Of importance is the rather consistent impact of Wesley's pessimism concerning human nature. With respect to the specific ideas which are analyzed herein, it may be said first that Wesley's concern was for order. Wesley's tendency was to value order before change, though there were exceptions, and in holding this view he may be termed a conservative. In this mood, also, Wesley was probably participating, at least to an extent, in the values of his own age which tended to over-emphasize the value of order. Even though Wesley emphasized order, he was quite aware of the need for change, and, indeed, exhibited a certain amount of ambivalence in his conception of the relationship between the two. Wesley's emphasis on order did not lead him to exalt the rights of property or the propertied classes, as it might have done. Unlike thinkers such as Locke and Adam Smith, Wesley rejected the idea that the government should always defend property holders.[113] Rather, it would seem that if the government had a function to protect property at all, it was to protect the rights of the people in all property and to make them secure against illicit uses of property.

---

[113] See Laski, Political Thought, pp. 39-40, 226-227, for Locke and Smith respectively.

In the concepts of property, equality, and justice which Wesley held it is possible to see distinctive differences between him and the conservative tendencies (shared by Whig and Tory alike) of his times. Wesley was convinced of the basic equality of human nature and this resulted in a call for freedom for those who were not free (as in the case of Negro slaves). Related to the problem of equality was that of justice -- justice, like equality, arose partially out of Wesley's concept of love. Wesley's concept of justice was also closely related to the idea of equality and in some sense arose from it. This concern resulted in calls for the reform of criminal justice and in demands for equitable treatment of all people. It is clear that the three ideas of property, equality, and justice were explained by Wesley as they were as a result of his ethical ideals. More nearly consistent with his concern for order was his exaltation of monarchy (of the Revolution Settlement) and his rejection of popular sovereignty and consent and his rather restricted views on representation. In this Wesley is more closely akin to Burke than to Locke. He failed to see, as Locke had seen, that the theory of consent is extremely important for the protection of values such as equality and justice. It may be said that Wesley was perhaps more Tory than Whig, but the sometimes ambivalent and not quite consistent themes in his political thought suggest that this is a conclusion which means relatively little. The ambivalence in Wesley's thought reflects, to a large extent, the ambivalence of the age.

Related to the foregoing, particularly as attributes of Wesley's ethical critiques of the politics and society of his day, are his ideas concerning political economy, education, health, and international relations. Wesley rather pointedly rejected the laissez-faire economic philosophy of Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson. While it is true that Wesley did not advocate the welfare or the socialist state, he was, nonetheless, aware of major problems concerning the economy (such as taxes, poverty, and unemployment). This awareness, together with his ethic of love, compelled him to call for public action (through the government and through cooperative action) from time to time. In the areas of education and health, it may be said that Wesley did not call for much governmental action, but it should be added that he did not deny such a possibility. His ideas in these areas are important, however, for they fostered the growth of popular educational and health measures. A recognition of popular needs must precede governmental intervention. Finally, in the area of international relations, Wesley saw the international system as a system of conflict which itself arose from man's sinfulness. He was sufficiently realistic to recognize that international politics would not be conducted according to Christian principles (which he would have liked), but he thought that at least nations should use a certain kind of moral expediency. With respect to war, though he abhorred it, Wesley recognized the possibility of a just war in defense of the nation. This position was consistent with his notion that one primary purpose of the state was to limit the impact of sin on society and thus to maintain order.

While Wesley's political thought reflects his theology and his ethics, and while he has contributed some interesting ideas concerning the relationship of theology to politics, it must be recognized that unlike other political thinkers, such as Locke, or later, Adam Smith, Wesley made no attempt to present a systematic theory. By and large, Wesley's political thought developed in response to specific problems which tended to give a kind of pragmatic gloss to his ideas. A further source of ambivalence in Wesley's thought seems to arise from his radical pessimism concerning human nature on the one hand and his optimistic ethic of love, on the other. A tension in Wesley's theology is created by these not always well related attributes of the Christian and that tension works its way into Wesley's political thought, as well.

CHAPTER V

CHURCH AND STATE IN WESLEYAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

As the problem of developing an interpretation of the Revolution Settlement progressed through the eighteenth century, the concept of the church became a major distinguishing feature of the respective ideologies that may be labeled Whig and Tory. Generally the Whigs accepted a Free Church concept of the church while the Tories maintained a High Church position.[1] Harold Laski has pointed out that the major problem of church-state relations in the eighteenth century revolved around the Erastian question.[2] Erastianism represented the view that the state should dominate the church. Opposition to this position came from High-Churchmen who proposed that church and state should stand equal. The monarchy advocated the Erastian position, as did Locke. As the controversy developed, it became clear that the Free Church attitude concerning the church supported the Erastian position while the High Church view supported the idea of co-equal systems.

---

[1] The Free Church position is associated with the English dissenters. It generally emphasized a personal relationship with God, the church as a simple community of believers, and the irrelevance of the formal organization of the church.

[2] Harold J. Laski, Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham (London: Home University Library, 1919), pp. 62-78. Laski has also suggested (p. 20) that during this period there were three basic questions for English political theory. First and foremost was the place of the church in the revolution state and the nature of that state. This problem is best elaborated in the Bangorian Controversy and especially in the writings of Hoadly and Law. Second was the problem of consent. This problem has already been analyzed especially with respect to the Wilkes and American questions. The third problem relates to the interpretation of the principles of 1688. This problem has been alluded to several times and actually underlies much of what has been said throughout this study.

Not only was the question of the relationship between church and state important in the eighteenth century, but it has also been one of the questions of continuing importance in the history of Christian political thought.[3] The classical statement of this problem is found in the thought of St. Augustine who believed that the individual owed allegiance to both church and state, and that both formed societies which could demand that allegiance.[4] This position was quickly related to the theological attitude which regarded the church as a juridical body and this in turn is symbolized by the church's right to administer (or not to administer) the sacraments. Wesley's position on this point is of the utmost importance. Moreover, Wesley's whole position was related to the conceptual schema advanced in Chapter II.

---

[3] It should perhaps be noted that this question continues, in twentieth century America, to be one of importance. Recent decisions of the Supreme Court make it manifestly obvious that the precise relationship between church and state in the United States has not yet been settled, the First Amendment notwithstanding. It is not too much to suggest that the First Amendment, and the recent decisions of the Court, imply a non-Erastian position. That is, neither the church nor the state should control, nor be controlled by, the other.

[4] Charles N. R. McCoy, "St. Augustine," in History of Political Philosophy, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), pp. 151-159. This is related to the church's right to "bind and loose" (i.e., to excommunicate) members. McCoy notes (p. 153) that Augustine thought that both church and state were recognizable and "visible" societies. The church functions as the guardian of the scriptures and the law of the Old and New Testaments. If this was not explicitly a juridical conception of the church, it nonetheless provided support for the theory.

In terms of the history of Christian political and ecclesiastical thought, the Free Churches have tended to interpret the church simply as a community of voluntary believers placing great importance on the faith of the individual. On the other hand, Classical Protestantism has stressed the idea of the church as the mystical body of Christ. This constitutes a step in the direction of the interpretation of the church as a collective or corporate entity but it is of an heavenly and other-worldly nature. This has the tendency of removing the church from any direct confrontation with the social order except through the back door of an ethical position. The reason for this is that Classical Protestantism, like the Free Church -- though perhaps not so emphatically -- denied the need for a "visible" church on Earth. Finally, the Catholic tradition had emphasized the concept of the church as a juridical body. The church, as an historic extension of the incarnation, becomes the visible representative of God on Earth. This implies that the church has rights and obligations in the social order apart from any other political system. This position has been variously interpreted to mean that the church is either coequal with the state or superior to it. In a very real sense Wesley adopted a theory which combines elements of all three traditional views. In this he was not advocating incompatible ideas (for the three concepts are not incompatible). In terms of church government the three interpretations have expressed themselves in the congregational, the presbyterian, and the episcopal forms respectively.[5]

The Church in the Eighteenth Century

From the standpoint of political theory the position of the Anglican Church was radically altered by the Revolution Settlement. The Church of England before the Revolution was regarded as a juridical body co-equal with the state.[6] This could happen only in a situation in which a single body, the Church of England, was recognized as having legal validity, or in which it had primary legal validity. The Uniformity Act of 1662, the Five Mile Act (1665), and the Conventicle Act (1670) were all designed to protect the integrity of the Church of England. All this came to an end, however, in 1689 with the Toleration Act and expulsion of the Non-Jurors from the Church of England. The Non-Jurors were expelled as a result of their opposition to the deposition of James II, and the

---

[5] See An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Works, Vol. XIII, p. 31; for a comment on Wesley's interpretations, see Colin W. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 142.

[6] It must be recognized that this is something of an oversimplification. At least from Henry VIII on, while the church had retained the theory of independence or co-equal status, the monarch had exercised considerable influence in church organizations and politics. The theory here held, however, was that the monarch wore two hats, one as head of state, the other as head of the church. Hence, the church and state were still co-equal, though of course in practice the state, through the government, meddled in church affairs. The behavior of the state was Erastian, the theory was non-Erastian. After the Revolution of 1689 the theory became more explicitly Erastian.

Toleration Act implicitly recognized churches other than the Church of England. Moreover, the rationale for the Revolution made by Locke, and the Whigs generally, forced a rather thoroughgoing reconsideration of the whole church-state question.[7]

Locke contended that civil authority is concerned only with the preservation of order and should not deal with the problem of men's souls. This position was later extended by men such as Hoadly to mean that it was the function of civil authority (not ecclesiastical authority) to regulate human behavior, and this included the politics of church administration. From his position Locke contended that in the English situation all men are to be tolerated save Roman Catholics, Mohammedans, and atheists -- the first because they themselves deny the right of toleration, the second because Islamic principles are incompatible with European civil systems, and the third because of the denial of the only ultimately satisfactory sanction for good conduct.[8] Locke's position sanctions what had, in fact, been the Parliamentary solution of the church-state problem in the Revolution. The theoretical position of the church was also compromised by Locke's contractualism which based political organization on men, not on God. The juridical theory of the church is based upon the supposition that power, civil and ecclesiastical, comes from God. Locke's theories were extended by Bishop Hoadly, a Latitudinarian and a Whig, especially in the Bangorian Controversy. To the theories expressed by Locke (and related to Hooker), Hoadly added Protestant theological premises.

---

[7] For the texts of the above-mentioned acts see Andrew Browning (ed.), English Historical Documents (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953), Vol. VIII, pp. 377-382; 384-386; 400-403.

[8] Laski, Political Thought, p. 44.

Hoadly maintained that the theory of a visible church of Christ on Earth (the juridical view) was unsupportable. He claimed that the true church of God existed only in Heaven and that the relation of man to God is a private matter symbolized only by sincerity. This combines elements of Free Church and Classical Protestant doctrine. The result of this attitude was that the church could not exercise the powers implied in the juridical doctrine of the church. The church, therefore, as a social organization, had no supernatural mandate to oppose the human claims of the state. Working on this theory it was natural that Hoadly opposed the Occasional Conformity Act (1711) and the Schism Act (1714) both of which constituted a kind of conservative reaction to the Revolution. Opposed to Hoadly was William Law, himself a Non-Juror. Law pointed out that if sincerity is the primary object of religion there can be no objective truth, for the objects of sincerity may be either correct or incorrect. According to Law, Hoadly's argument not only subverted absolute authority -- which the Church of England did not claim -- but any authority in the church. Furthermore, Hoadly's position undermined the authority of the state, for all lawful authority must affect eternal salvation insofar as to disobey it is to sin. As Laski has suggested:

> the sum total of it all is that for the bishop the outward actions of men alone concern the State; while Law insists that the root of action and the test of fitness is whether men have seen a certain aspect of the truth and grasped it.[9]

The question for this chapter is, of course: how does Wesley relate to the foregoing?

Wesley's Doctrine of the Church

In general, it was Wesley's concept of the church as a juridical body which most influenced his political thought. This is true even though he tended to regard the "true Church of Christ" as a unity with various subdivisions. Thus, he thought that no particular denomination was the "true Church" but that the church was one, and every society of "true believers" was a branch of the one "true Church of Christ."[10] The two things of which Wesley was most convinced, the validity of the Bible as the primary guide for faith and practice, and his own conviction that God had called him to preach the Gospel, together with his ideas concerning conscience, led him to develop a theory that might possibly justify revolution (see above). These "evangelical" concerns of Wesley led him from a rather doctrinaire High Church (or juridical) position to a modified High Church position with a resulting vagueness concerning the positive nature of the church.[11]

---

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92. For the whole controversy see **ibid.**, pp. 85ff.; and F. J. C. Hearnshaw (ed.), *Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1923), pp. 128-148.

[10] *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 35 (to Gilbert Boyce, May, 1750). This position, in the hands of some, could be (but is not necessarily) incompatible with the concept of the church as a juridical body. As will be seen, the problem hinges around the concept of the origin of both church and state. It may be noted that even the Roman Catholic Church, at the most recent session of the Second Vatican Council (Fall, 1964), declared that it now accepts other denominations in Christendom as legitimate churches. This implies that all churches have some juridical legitimacy in the eyes of Rome.

Many of the problems alluded to in the preceding paragraph can be better understood in relation to Wesley's views of the church as a community of believers, as the mystical body of Christ, and as a juridical body. The first two can be disposed of quickly for they simply did not influence Wesley's political thought (nor were they influenced by it) to any measurable extent.[12]

The Church as a Community of Believers

The most consistent element of Wesley's doctrine of the church is that aspect which views the church as a community of believers. In 1740 he went so far as to define the Church of England as composed of any "real" Christian in England, whatever his denomination.[13] This, it should be added, was not his normal definition of the Church of England. Essentially, for Wesley, the catholic church was made up of all those people who were "living members of Christ on earth," that is, all those individuals who are real Christians.[14] This idea Wesley put forth many times and it was a persistent feature of his doctrine of the church.[15] It is Wesley's insistence on the church as a "gathered" people of God that is so close to what might be called the Free Church doctrine.

---

[11] See Edgar W. Thompson, Wesley: Apostolic Man (London: The Epworth Press, 1957), p. 14; and John M. Todd, John Wesley and the Catholic Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), pp. 166, 170.

[12] Most of Wesley's commentators, being Methodists, or at least Protestants, have tended to emphasize these aspects of Wesley's theology of the church. The reason for this is, presumably, that they wish to place him squarely within the Protestant tradition. In doing this, however, they have tended to neglect what was most important in Wesley's thought--elements of the High Church tradition. Another impetus for this one-sided approach revolves around the importance that Methodists have placed upon Wesley's Aldersgate experience -- probably more emphasis than Wesley did himself.

[13] Journal, Works, Vol. I, pp. 262-263 (February, 1740).

On the other hand, Wesley's added insistence concerning the preaching of the pure Word keeps him from the "doctrinal indifference which sometimes characterizes the Free Church tradition."[16] Wesley's notion of the church as a "gathered people" is dependent on the evangelical view of the subjective vertical relationship of the individual with God. This concept stands in opposition to the "multitudinous" view of the state church to which Wesley belonged. He did, however, try "to hold these apparently contradictory views together."[17] This comment suggests the tension that formed in Wesley's view of the church. This typically Protestant idea of the church is related to the individual's private judgment concerning the truth of religion. As has been noted, Wesley firmly believed that God's truth could be known through the "uninterpreted" reading of the Bible. This idea, together with his notion of conscience, suggests the highly individualized theology propounded by Hoadly.[18] In this view of the church Wesley does, in fact, come closest to Hoadly, theologically. A note of caution is expressed by Wesley, however, when the question of "sincerity" of private judgment is raised. Like Law, Wesley pointed out that the objects of sincerity need not be valid.[19] Hence, for Wesley, while the vertical relationship between the individual and God is important, it does not hold the central position in his theology that it did for Hoadly. Even though Wesley here comes close to Hoadly, his differences were significant enough to prevent him from making the political deduction to Erastianism that Hoadly made.

---

[14] Letters, Vol. III, p. 9 (to a Roman Catholic, July, 1749).

[15] Works, Vol. VI, p. 394 (Sermon lxxiv).

[16] Williams, op. cit., p. 144.

[17] Ibid., p. 149.

The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ

The second element in Wesley's doctrine of the church may also be disposed of briefly. This is the concept of the church as the mystical body of Christ. This idea is associated with Classical Protestantism and is related to the idea of the church as a community of believers. Whereas the latter theory propounds a kind of religious individualism, the former promotes the corporate character of the church. The corporatism is that of the "mystical body of Christ" rather than a corporatism demanded by legal rights and obligations. For both doctrines of the church -- as a community of believers and as the mystical body of Christ -- church organization and social structure are unimportant. Thus, with these two positions the church-state question does not involve any kind of theological imperative which might dictate the nature of the relationship. Most Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, hold to both concepts, but the Catholic tradition (both Roman and non-Roman) extends beyond these while much of Protestantism stops with them. Edgar Thompson points out that at various times Wesley defined the church "not by the form of its government, but by the faith and life of its members."[20] John Todd concurs that "Wesley believed in the communion of saints, and held that the church was Christ's mystical body. . . . [and this view was] fully orthodox from a [Roman] Catholic point of view."[21] Thus, it is clear that Wesley embodied within his doctrine of the church both of the traditional concepts of Protestantism, but important for this study is the fact that neither significantly influenced his political thought.

---

[18] See above, and Hearnshaw, op. cit., p. 144.

[19] Works, Vol. V, p. 108 (Sermon ix).

The Church as a Juridical Body

The concept of the church as a juridical entity is perhaps the most complex segment of Wesley's doctrine of the church. It was in connection with this element that he changed the most, perhaps due to the fact that it is here that the tension between the three traditional views of the church became most severe. It is, however, with the juridical concept of the church that Wesley's political thought may be most closely associated. Wesley firmly believed that God delivered power and authority to man through two political systems: the civil and the ecclesiastical. He contended that although God is the sole sovereign judge and lawgiver, he yet empowers subordinate civil and ecclesiastical magistrates "to make regulations therein in subordination to Him."[22] Moreover, Wesley argued that the society called the Church of England had the authority to administer or not to administer the sacraments as it saw fit, or to exclude whom it pleased, though this did not necessarily mean that those excluded were not Christians.[23] As Todd points out, of "Wesley's belief in a juridical body with the power to bind and loose there can be no doubt."[24]

---

[20] Thompson, op. cit., p. 16.

[21] Todd, op. cit., pp. 173-175.

From what has been said it is apparent that Wesley did not have what might be termed the most consistent concept of the church as a juridical body. This impression is heightened when some of his doubts concerning the Church of England are cited.[25] It is also apparent, however, that a strong element of the "Catholic" influence remained with him throughout his life. Two aspects of Wesley's thought further explicate the problem and its relation to political theory: ordination and the ministry, and the sacraments.

---

[22] Letters, Vol. III, p. 152 (to Samuel Walker, November, 1755). It is interesting to note that this is a direct argument against the similar notion of God's sovereignty advanced by Jacques Maritain who argues that because God is sovereign there cannot be any such thing as national sovereignty. See Man and the State (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 49-50. Wesley here promotes a concept of what might be termed "delegated" sovereignty. God allows government to have temporal sovereignty.

[23] **Letters, Vol. III, p. 152.**

[24] Todd, op. cit., p. 173. See John Wesley, Explanatory Notes, pp. 81-82; The Advantages of the Members of the Church of England over Those of the Church of Rome, Works, Vol. X, p. 139; Popery Calmly Considered, Works, Vol. X, pp. 140-141; A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto, Works, Vol. X, p. 126.

Ordination and the Ministry. -- In assessing the relationship between church and state the problem of ordination and the ministry is of the utmost importance. The two poles of this problem are again reflected in the writings of Hoadly (representing the Whig position) and Law (representing the Non-Juring and High Church Tory positions). Law, following traditional Catholic doctrine, asserted that the church through its clergy in apostolic succession had an independent authority and that the state could neither confer nor deprive the church of that authority. Hoadly, on the other hand, basing his argument upon the notion of unfettered private judgment, contended that church organization was irrelevant. Moreover, he claimed that since church and state must live together and since the church organization does in fact lay claim on the government, then "whatever affects the Civil Power becomes a matter of a civil nature."[26] The conclusion Hoadly drew from this was that the government had every right to deprive the clergy of its authority, for "if the ecclesiastical power is not under the Civil Power . . . the Civil must be under the ecclesiastical."[27] The question concerning Wesley revolves around whether his thought approximates that of Law or Hoadly.

---

[25] Letters, Vol. III, p. 131 (to his Brother Charles, June, 1755).

[26] Benjamin Hoadly, A Preservative against the Principles and Practices of the Non-Jurors, Works (London, 1773), p. 579, as quoted in Hearnshaw, op. cit., p. 140.

That Wesley and Law were one on the question of the origin of civil and ecclesiastical power and authority there can be little doubt. During his days at Oxford and for some years thereafter, Wesley held a traditional view of the clergy, one that might be called the orthodox Catholic position. He believed that there were three distinct orders in the clergy -- deacons, priests, and bishops -- and that these were of "divine appointment."[28] However, after a reading of Peter King's _An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church_ in January, 1746, he came to feel that bishops were superior to priests administratively, but not in divine order.[29] Wesley made the note concerning King's book and its impression on him in his Journal only three weeks after he had reaffirmed that it would not be proper for a man to administer the sacraments who was not duly ordained by "bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles."[30] Even in this shift of position away from the traditional concept of apostolic succession Wesley was not wholly consistent. As late as 1761 he contended that the clergy of the Church of England were as much in the traditional succession as the clergy of Rome.[31]

---

[27] _Ibid._, p. 141 (Hoadly, p. 582).

[28] _Letters_, Vol. I, p. 274 (to James Hutton, November, 1738).

[29] Peter King (1669-1734), Lord Chancellor of England, was born at Exeter in 1669. He served in various offices in the English government including member of Parliament, Judge, and Speaker of the House of Lords. Though he left his mark on British law and legal practice, King's importance for Wesley was his book, _An Enquiry into . . . the Primitive Church_ (1691). See "King (of Ockam), Peter King," _Encyclopedia Britannica_ (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1953), Vol. 13, p. 392. When Wesley first read King's book he oversimplified it a little when he said that it "would follow from King that Bishops and Presbyters are (essentially) of one order" (_Journal_, _Works_, Vol. II, p. 6 [January, 1746]). Thompson (_op. cit._, p. 25) comments that this "must be one of the rare cases in which an argument has converted an Anglo-Catholic. At the same

King's thesis, which is an oversimplification of historical reality, was that originally a diocese was more akin to a parish

---

time let us remember that the belief about the constitution of the Church which Wesley now renounced as erroneous had not prevented him from being for several years the most heroic and successful evangelist in our English history."

[30] Letters, Vol. II, p. 55 (to Westley Hall, December, 1745). This letter was also included in Wesley's Journal for December, 1745. This, together with the note concerning King's book, demonstrates two things about Wesley: first, it indicates his openness and willingness to change long held views should argument and scholarship demonstrate to his satisfaction that he had been wrong; and secondly, it suggests his honesty in seeking to keep his people abreast of any intellectual change he made. It must be stressed that in any adoption of King's point of view, however, Wesley was not giving up the concept of apostolic succession -- he was maintaining that succession came through priests rather than bishops.

[31] This comment appears in a letter to the editor of the London Chronicle, Letters, Vol. IV, pp. 139-140, in response to a tract entitled Caveat Against the Methodists, published anonymously by Richard Challoner, Bishop in charge of the Roman Catholic London District. Among other things Wesley refers to a study made by Peter F. Courayer (1681-1776), a Roman Catholic scholar who had written a book entitled Defense of the Validity of the English Ordinations in 1723, in defense of this position. Courayer, it should be noted, after writing the Defense had to take refuge in England in 1728, where he joined the English Church.

than to a modern episcopal see. King maintained that the priests (or presbyters) were ordained by the bishop (who presided over the diocese with the assistance of the presbyters). Most important for Wesley, however, was King's conclusion that a presbyter was

> a Person in Holy orders, having thereby an inherent Right to perform the whole office of a Bishop; but being possessed of no Place or Parish, not actually discharging it, without the Permission or consent of the Bishop of a Place or Parish.[32]

In other words, King held that the presbyter or priest had the theoretical power to administer all the sacraments and rites of the church, including ordination, but in order to do so he had to have the express permission of the bishop. Thus presbyters were inferior to bishops in administrative authority or degree but equal to them in order. Even at this early date (1746), therefore, it seems that Wesley was moving into what Todd calls "his subsequent agnosticism on the matter of succession [through bishops]."[33] In any event, from this time on Wesley was convinced that he had the formal authority to ordain, though he was so attached to the episcopacy and succession that he attempted in 1763 to have one of his preachers ordained by a Greek bishop visiting London.[34]

---

[32] As quoted by Thompson, op. cit., pp. 27-28. See also Thompson's commentary, p. 28.

[33] Todd, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

[34] This further supports the interpretation suggested concerning the reply to Challoner that Wesley never fully gave up the idea of succession through bishops.

Wesley himself dated his changed views of the episcopacy from his reading of Edward Stillingfleet,[35] though from all indications he read King first. Stillingfleet's argument was much broader than that of King, though both of them intended that their books should aid Christian unity in England.[36] Essentially Stillingfleet endeavored to prove that no form of church government possessed a divine right. The New Testament, he said, provided no blueprint for church organization and in any event, scripture on this point did not make it obligatory for all time. It seems that Stillingfleet was the foundation of Wesley's "pragmatism" and/or "agnosticism" concerning his view of the church. Thus, Wesley thought that before all else the church must be the "instrument of faith and life alike for the Christian individual and for the Christian community."[37] The divine right of any form of church organization could not, according to Wesley, be read in Scripture or proved thereby, and thus should not be made an article of faith "or be thought necessary to salvation."[38]

While belief in a specified organization of the church might not be necessary for salvation, Wesley nevertheless thought that a specified organization was necessary to confer the authority to administer the sacraments. It is this aspect of his theology of the church that is significant for political theory. By the time it became necessary to decide upon ordinations for America, Wesley had developed a theory of succession based partially on King's account of the early church and defended in part by Stillingfleet's arguments concerning church government. On September 1, 1784, Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as priests for American Methodists and consecrated Thomas Coke as bishop for The Methodist Episcopal Church. In seeking to justify all this, Wesley referred to the early church at Alexandria where the bishop had been elected by the presbyters and consecrated by them.[39] In this Wesley was explicitly following King.[40] By using this argument Wesley was attempting to keep his ordinations within the theology of succession that he had adopted by 1784. In addition to this modified argument concerning succession, Wesley added another -- that of necessity. He contended that in the absence of any ecclesiastical authority he was fully justified in using the powers that he thought all priests possessed. The situation in America, he contended, was just such a case of necessity.[41] It is interesting to note that Hoadly had used a similar argument from necessity in defending the ordinations made during the period of the Commonwealth.[42] With regard to the problem of obedience of priest to bishop, both Wesley and Hoadly gave minimal interpretations to the oaths taken by priests.

---

[35] Edward Stillingfleet (1635-1699), an English divine, became in 1653 a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, later vicar of Sutton, and finally bishop of Worcester. "His Irenicum (1659) endeavoured to provide a compromise for the divided church. His Origines Sacrae (1662) and Rational Account of the Protestant Religion (1664), defending the Church of England's breach with Rome, led to preferment." See J. O. Thorne (ed.), Chamber's Biographical Dictionary (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961, 1962), p. 1222.

[36] Thompson, op. cit., p. 17.

[37] Ibid., pp. 19-20. [38] Ibid.

---

[39] _Ibid._, pp. 31-33. For an extensive analysis of this, see pp. 12-30, and 46-52. This whole book centers on Wesley's consecration of Coke.

[40] _Letters_, Vol. VII, p. 238 (to the Brethren in America, September, 1784).

[41] _Ibid._; _Journal_, _Works_, Vol. IV, p. 288 (September, 1784).

Superficially, at least, there was some similarity between the positions developed by Wesley and Hoadly. It would be premature, however, to say that Wesley thereby took a Whiggish position. At the critical point for political theory, Hoadly's theses led him to maintain that authority in the church came ultimately from the state, while Wesley, even with all his vagaries, maintained that ecclesiastical authority came from God. Wesley's attempt to maintain some semblance of the doctrine of succession was mandatory, given his point of view concerning the origin of power and authority. At this point, even with his "agnosticism" concerning the nature of the church, Wesley stands closer to the High Church Tory concept than to the Latitudinarian/Nonconformist Whig idea. His continued denial of the capacity of laymen to administer Holy Communion gives further support to the interpretation of Wesley expressed above. Wesley's concepts concerning ordination and the ministry do, in the final analysis, support the interpretation that Wesley thought the church and the state co-equal in authority.

The Sacraments. -- If Wesley's concept of the church in relationship to ordination and the ministry is somewhat ambivalent, his concept of the sacraments -- an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace[43] -- was relatively consistent. Wesley started with a High Church approach to the sacraments and retained that approach throughout life. Along with most of Protestantism, he accepted the view that there are but two sacraments -- the Eucharist and baptism. The doctrine surrounding the Eucharist provides significant insight into the problems of this chapter.

---

[42] Hearnshaw, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

There have been two primary concepts of the sacraments in Christian history: the sacrament as sign (the Reformed and Zwinglian based churches), and the sacrament as God's grace in fact working in man (Anglicans, Lutherans, Roman and Eastern Catholics). In terms of the Eucharist -- the sacrament given primary importance in Christendom -- the first group regards the elements as mere signs or remembrances of Christ's death. The other group maintains that there is a real presence of Christ in the elements. The doctrine of the real presence is further subdivided by those who hold with transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or impanation. The political significance of the theology dealing with the sacraments lies in the fact that the adoption of the concept of the real presence was generally associated with the doctrine of Apostolic Succession and this in turn with the notion of the ecclesiastical society separate and distinct from the political (civil) society. Hoadly, for example, (even though a bishop of the Church of England) denigrated the authority of the clergy and adopted a Zwinglian interpretation of the Eucharist. Law, on the other hand, held to succession and to the doctrine of the real presence. Hoadly's position was Erastian; Law's, non-Erastian.

---

[43] For this definition of a sacrament, see the "Articles of Religion," Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church, 1960 (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1960), pp. 30-32.

Wesley clearly rejected the simplistic or Zwinglian interpretation of the Eucharist as a mere memorial service.[44] The Eucharist was, for Wesley, a means of grace by which God worked in man, and was furthermore the ordinary means by which God delivered his grace to man.[45] Only a properly ordained clergyman was capable of administering the Eucharist, and it could be administered by such a man regardless of his intentions or his own moral character, a distinctively Catholic and juridical conception.[46] Wesley, following closely Catholic Christianity, thought that God worked objectively in the sacrament and it was not even necessary for the communicant to believe that the sacrament was true.[47] Because of Wesley's acceptance, generally speaking, of the metaphysics of empiricism, he of necessity had to reject transubstantiation and consubstantiation (both of which are based on Aristotelian metaphysics). Clearly, though, he enunciates the doctrine of impanation and places himself within the context of the Anglo-Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist.[48] As Todd points out, Wesley generally held a Catholic rather than a Reformed view of the Eucharist.[49]

---

[44] Robert M. Goodloe, in The Sacraments in Methodism (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1953), p. 69, implies that the position of The Methodist Church is Zwinglian rather than Anglican. This is erroneous and is countered by explicit statements of the 16th and 18th Articles of Religion.

[45] Works, Vol. V, p. 185 (Sermon xvi).

[46] Letters, Vol. VI, p. 327 (to Mary Bishop, October, 1778).

[47] Works, Vol. V, p. 195 (Sermon xvi).

The Importance of the Doctrine of the Church. -- The purpose of the foregoing discussion has been to specify more clearly Wesley's view regarding the church. He attempted to hold aspects of all three traditional concepts of the church but there can be little doubt that the juridical theory concerning the church was more important to his political thought than were either the Free Church or Classical Protestant approaches. There were, for Wesley, two separate societies, the civil and the ecclesiastical. These existed side by side and were associated with one another, though he thought that neither should be dominant. It is clear that he rejected the Erastian position common to eighteenth century Whigs (of which Hoadly is an example) and just as clear that the concept of the church which he did hold reflected elements of his political thought, especially with respect to the origin of power and authority. Any denials of the juridical position came when Wesley felt that his

---

[48] Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 149 (Sermon ci).

[49] Todd, op. cit., pp. 146-172. See Williams, op. cit., pp. 116-139, 154-165; John C. Bowmer, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism (London: Dacre Press, 1951), pp. 166-186; J. E. Rattenbury, The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1948). The Catholic tendencies in Wesley's thought are brought home once more in his notes on the Apostolic Canons, reproduced as an appendix in Bowmer, pp. 233-237. This is the only published source for these notes.

"extraordinary" call was superior to and more important than his ordinary call (symbolized by his own ordination). Even in his attitude concerning ordination he retained the idea that some kind of legitimatizing succession was necessary for the purpose of the valid administration of the sacraments. Though elements of Wesley's thought concerning the church seem close to some Whig ideas, yet in the broad view they in fact support a High Church Toryism. Wesley's appeal, as well as Law's, was for the church to play a role in the social order that it had perhaps never played and certainly, with the triumph of Erastian sentiment in the century, did not play in his own time. Even Wesley's orthodoxy in his position that the church should be co-equal with the state was unorthodox and possibly outmoded in the eighteenth century. As the century moved onward Wesley increasingly reflected a minority position in terms of what the relationship between church and state should be.[50]

---

[50] For further information on the church-state problem in the eighteenth century see the following: Charles J. Abbey and John H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887); C. Sydney Carter, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century (London: Church Book Room Press, Ltd., 1948); Arthur Elliot, The State and the Church (London: The Macmillan Co., 1882); J. Wickham Legg, English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914); J. H. Overton, Life in the English Church, 1660-1714 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885); M. W. Patterson, A History of the Church of England (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912); J. S. Reynolds, The Evangelicals at Oxford, 1735-1871 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953); Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). Except where otherwise noted the discussions of the English Church in this chapter have been taken from these studies.

Establishment

The problem of the relationship between church and state in England is made complex because of the establishment of the Church of England. The very fact of establishment caused some complications in Wesley's thought concerning the relationship of church and state. Even though Wesley's concepts of church and state led him to the conclusions suggested above, he nonetheless recognized the position of dependence of the Church of England on the state. Because of the dependence of the Church of England on the state Wesley was not at all certain that civil authority did not have some prerogatives in matters of "indifference" in terms of the governance of the Church of England.[51] The important point here, however, is that he did not think that the church's authority (especially to administer the sacraments) was dependent on the state (a non-Erastian position).

Due in large part to his upbringing and socialization, and due in part, no doubt, to the fact that he was a clergyman of the

---

[51] Letters, Vol. III, p. 255 (to Micaiah Towgood, January, 1758). The term "indifference" in this context applied to matters not necessarily involved with salvation. Thus, a certain amount of "tinkering" by the government with ecclesiastical administration might be allowable. Governmental interference with the administration of the sacraments, on the other hand, would probably not constitute matters of "indifference." Likewise, this is the sense in which the term is used below in connection with religious liberty. Such liberty was not a matter of indifference for Wesley, for without it the opportunities men had to be saved were limited. The term is also used by Wesley in some contexts to mean a situation involving no particular interest. Thus, thought Wesley, the government of the United States was "indifferent" to, or expressed no particular interest in, whether an individual had one set of religious values or another or none at all.

Church of England, Wesley thought that the Church of England was the best national church extant. Although Wesley had a great love for the Church of England he was not, certainly, wedded to the idea of an established church. In fact, he was convinced that Christianity began to decline after Constantine in effect established it in the Roman Empire. Constantine, by heaping riches on the church in general and the clergy in particular, did a disservice in his "vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause."[52] The result of these riches was a decline in the concern of the church for salvation and a rise in the desire for wealth and power. As a result of the application of elements of the Act of Toleration and the Conventicle Act against himself and the Methodists, Wesley was keenly aware of the threat to religious liberty posed by the state. Because Wesley claimed to be within the Church of England he refused for a long time to permit the licensing of Methodist meeting houses as dissenting houses of worship under the Toleration Act. Even after he consented to licensing, some magistrates refused to recognize Methodist licenses because of the continued claim to be a part of the Church of England. As a result of this the full force of the Conventicle Act stood against him had some magistrate wished to enforce it.[53] As late as 1790

---

[52] Works, Vol. VII, p. 26 (Sermon lxxxix). See, also, ibid., p. 164 (Sermon cii), p. 276 (Sermon cxv); Vol. VI, p. 261 (Sermon lxi).

[53] See the discussion of this in John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), pp. 301-302; Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. 199 (June, 1739). Wesley was apparently violating the Conventicle Act in field preaching, though he would never admit it.

Wesley wrote to Wilberforce protesting the operation of the Conventicle Act against Methodists and asked, "where, then, is English liberty? the liberty of Christians?"[54]

As a result of his doubts concerning establishment, exemplified in his interpretation of the relationship of Constantine to the church and in his problems as a result of the Act of Toleration and the Conventicle Act, Wesley came ultimately to question the wisdom of establishment at all. Wesley's first concern was, of course, with his evangelistic enterprise. In order to evangelize, however, he had to be assured the freedom to promote Christianity. In this he was sometimes inhibited. He thought that the liberty to spread Christianity through field preaching or other techniques was not a matter of "indifference" and that neither the state nor the church had any right to interfere with him.[55] As a result of his doubts concerning establishment, and as a result of his demand (and need) for religious liberty, Wesley reached the conclusion that the kind of separation of church and state established by the Constitution in the United States provided the best framework for the expansion of true Christianity:

> The total indifference of the government there [in the United States], whether there be any religion or none, leaves room for the propagation of true, scriptural religion, without the least let [sic] or hinderance.[56]

---

[54] Letters, Vol. VIII, p. 231 (to William Wilberforce, July, 1790).

[55] Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 147 (to the Earl of Dartmouth, April, 1761).

[56] Works, Vol. VII, p. 165 (Sermon cii).

Wesley always believed that the state could go too far in trying to protect an established church. Moreover, the first consideration was liberty, rather than establishment or separation. When establishment negated liberty, then it was no longer of any value.[57]

Roman Catholic Toleration

Related to the foregoing is the problem of the toleration of Roman Catholics. In the period prior to about 1760 Roman Catholicism was seen by the English as a political ideology as much (or more than) as a religion. It has already been noted that such men as Locke and Hoadly categorically denied the right of Roman Catholics to toleration. Moreover, the attempted invasion by the Stuart pretender in 1745 under the banner of Roman Catholicism tended to reinforce the English attitude toward Catholicism. This fact, coupled with a real prejudice among the English and Scots against Roman Catholics, dissuaded for most of the century any effort to give political relief to them, though after the accession of William III there was little attempt to enforce the full rigor of the penal laws. Legally, however, Roman Catholics remained in a vulnerable position.

---

[57] The term "liberty" is used here to denote "religious liberty" and by religious liberty Wesley meant the ability to follow God freely and without compulsion. Even though Wesley, in general, supported the Church of England as an established church he never claimed for the Church of England the right to be the sole representative of the "Church of Christ"in England. If men were to follow God freely, they would also have to be able to propagate the gospel as they saw it. Thus, Wesley did not see establishment of the Church as a denial in itself of religious freedom, though if the state, as part of the establishment, were to enforce adherence to the Church of England, it would then be denying religious liberty. This, Wesley thought, was precisely the case under the Act of Uniformity.

By the 1770's many in the educated classes saw little reasonable objection to allowing ordinary civil rights to Roman Catholics who would take an oath of allegiance, though few would trust them with full political rights. As a result of this sentiment the Roman Catholic Relief Bill of 1778 was passed. Calling for repeal of the bill, a so-called Protestant Association was formed in both Scotland and England. The agitation of the Protestant Associations in both countries resulted in riots, the most massive of which was the Gordon riot of 1780 in London, led by Lord George Gordon. Though Wesley objected to the penal laws against Roman Catholics and did not wish them to be enforced, he also objected to the Relief Act on political grounds. Wesley in his dealings with Roman Catholics personally, and even religiously, was not overly prejudiced -- even though he participated in the anti-Catholic sentiment of his day -- and certainly less so than many of his contemporaries. On this latter score he even applauded the fact that the government, after the acquisition of Canada, had established the Roman Catholic Church alongside the Church of England because most of the French Canadians were Roman Catholic.[58] When the Protestant Association was first formed Wesley also applauded its position, though after the Gordon riots he objected to the violence it had induced and came to distrust it.[59]

---

[58] Some Observations on Liberty, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 113-114.

The inescapable conclusion concerning Wesley's reaction to the Catholic Relief Bill is that he viewed Roman Catholicism as an undesirable political ideology. This attitude -- which might have retained some legitimacy as late as 1760 -- was no longer applicable by 1778. Until about 1760 the actual, threatened, or feared invasion by the Stuart Pretender -- supported ideologically by Roman Catholicism and militarily by Roman Catholic France -- posed a threat to England. By 1778, however, Roman Catholics could no longer hope with reason for the return of the house of Stuart. During the same period France ended any attempt to use the Stuart Pretender to gain a foothold in England. Wesley apparently was unable to comprehend these political changes. This inability was reinforced, no doubt, by prejudice against the Church of Rome. In the whole context of his life, however, this represents not a denial of his views on liberty but more a failure to apprehend fully the changed political situation of Roman Catholics in England.[60] It must be noted as well that this took place during the American Revolution at a time when there were other disruptive factors in English political life, and Wesley may have felt that the particular moment was not opportune for liberalizing the laws regarding Roman Catholicism.[61]

---

[59] Charles Wesley, The Protestant Association (London: J. Paramore, at the Foundry, 1781), went much further than John, though through John's publishing house. This tract is a bitingly satirical poem directed against the anti-Catholic sentiments of the Gordon riots. See Green, Bibliography, p. 213, no. 357. While John never came out so strongly against the Protestant Association, given the censorship he exercised over publications emanating from his presses, even those of his brother, he could not have been totally out of sympathy with the views Charles expressed.

[60] It could be argued, of course, that Wesley would not have changed his position on Roman Catholics even had he recognized these political changes. While this is a possibility, of course, there is no documentary evidence to support such an hypothesis. Furthermore,

Administration and Church Government

Related to the subject matter of this chapter are certain ideas not adequately explored at this point. Among these are the theory of administration Wesley held and the manner in which this was worked out in Methodist organization. Thoroughly in keeping with the aristocratic sentiment of his time, Wesley organized Methodism along hierarchal lines culminating in his power at the top.[62]

---

praise for the establishment of the Roman Church in Canada, his objections to the penal laws against Roman Catholics, and his changed attitudes concerning the Protestant Association, all imply that his prejudice was not so deep-seated so as to preclude an alteration of viewpoint.

[61] Although there is a fairly large body of material in the Wesleyan corpus on Roman Catholicism, perhaps most indicative of Wesley's position is _A Disavowal of Persecuting Papists_, _Works_, Vol. X, pp. 173-175. This tract was written in March, 1782. Wesley (p. 174) contended that Roman Catholics "have enjoyed a full toleration. I wish them to enjoy the same toleration still." He went on to say, however, that "I would not put it into their power to hurt me, or any other persons whom they believe to be heretics . . . I wish them well, but I dare not trust them." It is interesting to note that Methodist Edwards, _op. cit._, pp. 57-59, 102-106, 110, condemns Wesley for his prejudice and alleged intolerance while Roman Catholic Todd, _op. cit._, pp. 11, 84-86, 100-101, virtually exonerates him on the same points.

[62] In addition to later citations in this chapter, see, also, _Letters_, Vol. II, pp. 296-305 (to Vincent Perronet, 1748); Vol. V, p. 155 (to Professor John Liden, November, 1769); and _Journal_, _Works_, Vol. II, p. 58 (June, 1747); Vol. III, p. 246 (September, 1757).

Consistent, too, with his own political thought as it has thus far been developed, was the structuring of Methodism along non-democratic lines. A government of either church or state can, of course, be hierarchical and democratic. In the Methodist organization, however, decisions were made at the top and very little concerning policy or personnel was decided by majority vote. In a sense, Wesley erected a monarchy in microcosm. Later, when American Methodism organized as a church, Wesley superimposed the episcopal organizational structure on the new body. Moreover, the first two bishops, Coke and Asbury, were selected by Wesley himself. In keeping with the republican and democratic sentiments of America, the appointment of Asbury was ratified by the American Conference.[63]

---

[63] On the basis of these differences between British and American Methodism, and on the basis of the impact of society and politics on Wesley's own thought, it may be argued that environment seems to determine theory. One exponent of this position, Daniel J. Boorstin, argues that geography, history, and cultural experience determines a society, rather than abstract ideas. This, says Boorstin, is especially true of the United States. Boorstin, however, may fail to recognize that in some sense all social orders (and hence theories about those social orders) are only the result of the collective socialization process of the people involved. This is not the same, however, as Burke's theory of organic development, as Boorstin seems to believe. American Methodist leaders had, by 1784, abandoned the principle of monarchy. They had not, however, adopted a representative form of government for the Methodist Church. The Conference in America, as in England, was composed of only the clergy, who represented only themselves, and not of lay delegates. The Methodist Church in the twentieth century barely nods in the direction of serious lay representation in the Annual Conferences or in the General Conference. This problem has a relation, too, to the earlier distinction made between an "artificial" and an "organic" development of the state. As a representative statement of Boorstin's position, see The Genius of American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 1-7.

Even the desire for such popular ratification was foreign to Wesley's thinking, however. In the manner in which Wesley organized Methodism it is possible to see further evidence of his doubts about the utility of democracy. It is also possible to see his continued conviction that the episcopacy, as a governmental form, was an excellent method for governing ecclesiastical bodies.

The capstone of the Methodist organization under Wesley was the Annual Conference, first organized in 1744. The Conference was composed of Wesley and selected clergy and lay preachers. The Conference, however, was but a sounding board for Wesley's policies and provided little opportunity for disagreement with him. Administratively Methodism was organized into groups of itinerant preachers, each with a circuit of Methodist Societies, with superintendents responsible to Wesley in administering their affairs. Each Society was composed of one or more classes (cells of ten to twelve members). The preachers were paid a yearly stipend by Wesley with increments for dependents but with food and lodging provided by the various Methodist bodies. Wesley very early made certain that each Methodist preaching place was technically owned by himself, and that trustees of each meeting house were his own representatives. One of the methods of social control Wesley apparently utilized was public confession at weekly class meetings. He rejected the notion that he liked power and was ambitious, but recognized that he had a good deal of power, which he felt perfectly capable of using properly.[64] It was due largely to Wesley's skill as an organizer that his portion of the movement had a more lasting effect than did Whitefield's. Edwards commented that it is no "wonder Macauley thought Wesley's powers of government scarce inferior to those of Richelieu."[65]

That Wesley's organizational prowess was recognized may be demonstrated by reference to the adoption by the Chartists and other groups of the forms which he had constructed. Even before the 1830's union organization had been molded on the Methodist structure. A case in point was the combination formed among the frame-work knitters under the influence of Gravenor Henson. This organization started its career in January, 1813, and it apparently followed Methodist organization in some detail.[66] Like the knitters, the larger Chartist movement explicitly adopted the Methodist organizational pattern and many individual Methodists were involved in the movement though there was official hostility on the part of Wesleyan Methodism.[67] Sherwin suggests that had "Methodism been a cross current to political radicalism such plagiarism would have been well nigh impossible."[68] Various kinds of labor activity were stimulated by the entrance of people trained in organizational techniques by Methodism. It is interesting to note, too, that a large number of trade union leaders in nineteenth century England came from the ranks of Methodism.[69] It must be recognized, of course, that organization is one thing, the objects of that organization another. Here the concern was with administrative theory, not with the objectives of that administration.

---

[64] See Letters, Vol. VI, p. 376 (January, 1730), and the discussions by Edwards, op. cit., p. 18, and Oscar Sherwin, John Wesley: Friend of the People (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961), p. 81. See, also, Letters, Vol. VI, p. 127 (to John Fletcher, January, 1773).

[65] Edwards, op. cit., p. 178. For further comment on Wesley's churchmanship with special regard to Methodism see the following: Frank Baker, "John Wesley's Churchmanship," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review (July, 1960), 210-213; Reginald Kissack, "Wesley's Concept of his own Ecclesiastical Position," ibid. (January, 1961), 57-60; Albert M. Lyles, Methodism Mocked (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), pp. 27-28; John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Methodist Societies (3rd. ed.; London: The Epworth Press, 1952), pp. 17, 21, 27, 92, 118, 199, 260-261; and Edgar W. Thompson, Wesley: Apostolic Man (London: The Epworth Press, 1957), pp. 17-44.

[66] J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, The Skilled Labourer, 1760-1832 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), p.230.

Conclusion

The question of the relationship between church and state was critical in eighteenth century England. The reason for this revolved around the continuing interpretation of the Revolution

---

[67] J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, The Age of the Chartists (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), pp. 246-249.

[68] Sherwin, op. cit., p. 189. For a detailed treatment on the relationship between Methodism and the working class population in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Robert Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England, 1800-1850 (London: The Epworth Press, 1937), p. 216; see, also, pp. 17, 21-22; Robert Wearmouth, Some Working-Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), pp. 32-33; Reinhard Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), pp. 45-46.

[69] G. Bromely Oxnam, Christianity and the British Labor Party (New Haven: National Religion and Labor Foundation, n.d.), pp. 1-4; Sherwin, op. cit., pp. 187-188; Maldwyn Edwards, After Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1935), pp. 35, 92, 155.

Settlement. Differing interpretations of the nature of the church and its relation to the state were part and parcel of Whig and Tory political ideology. The Free Church and Classical Protestant doctrines of the church were most closely associated with the Whigs while the Catholic doctrine was most closely associated with High Church Toryism (and with the Non-Jurors and Jacobites). Wesley adopted a somewhat ambivalent doctrine of the church incorporating elements of all three positions. In his idea of the church as a community of believers (Free Church position) he came closest to the Whig position as expressed by such people as Bishop Hoadly.[70] This correspondence of ideas, however, is limited to the religious, not the political, aspects of Whig philosophy. Even less important, from the viewpoint of Wesley's political philosophy, was his theory of the church as the mystical body of Christ (Classical Portestantism). Most important to Wesley's political thought was his notion of the church as a juridical body (Catholic doctrine). Wesley saw in the governments of both church and state agencies for the possession of authority and power (both of which are grants from God). For Wesley this meant that neither the church nor the state should dominate the other, but that they should rule co-equally. This interpretation is buttressed by his doctrines concerning the ministry and the sacraments. Although Wesley's thought at this point differs from that of both Hoadly and Law, there is more correspondence between Wesley and Law than between Wesley and

---

[70] This is related to the comment made in Chapter II in the discussion of conscience, that Wesley was, on this one point, closer to Hoadly than to Law.

Hoadly. Although Wesley firmly held to a juridical interpretation of the church, he did not think that the "Church of Christ" needed to be expressed in only one juridical body (or denomination). Moreover, while he felt a great emotional attachment for the Church of England, he was first interested in religious liberty. Thus, even though the Church of England was an established church, if establishment interfered with liberty he questioned the principle of establishment, but he did not see a necessary contradiction between establishment and religious liberty. The question of religious liberty was also raised with respect to the question of Roman Catholic Relief. Wesley thought Roman Catholics should be allowed religious toleration but doubted the wisdom of extending to them explicit political rights. In this he probably did not recognize the changes that had taken place in England between 1745 and 1780.

Much of Wesley's thought concerning the church-state problem is related to the conceptual framework established in Chapter II. God was the source of authority and power for both church and state (this relates to his doctrine of God). Authority and power (whether ecclesiastical or civil) were also necessary because of man's negative character (his doctrine of man). In addition, man was naturally sociable and this sociability was expressed in the corporate character of both the church and state. Moreover, Christianity itself was social in nature and this was partially exemplified in the juridical church. Finally, because of Wesley's concern for freedom as expressed in both his doctrine of God and his doctrine of man, he felt compelled to hold that at the very least dissent should be possible and at the most even revolution was sometimes necessary in both church and state. Furthermore, should such attributes as the establishment of religion denigrate liberty, then establishment itself was to be questioned. While the problems surrounding the concept of liberty suggest affinities with the Whig position of Hoadly, they are supplemented by the importance of the problem of order as expressed by Wesley's concern for authority. The latter, along with his denial of contractualism, are representative of his Tory leanings. Wesley's concern for order perhaps over-rode his concern for liberty on the question of Catholic Relief. In the end, however, there was with Wesley the thought that the church should stand co-equal with the state and that in the final analysis the church must be able to promulgate its gospel without state interference. In this Wesley was non-Erastian and took his stand at a great distance from Hoadly and the Erastianism of the Whigs.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this study there has been the attempt to relate Wesley's political thought to his theology on the assumption that the two could not be separated. There is a rather paradoxical element in Wesley's political thought, for while he propounded a non-democratic political philosophy, at the same time many of his theological and ethical ideas helped lay the foundations for democratic development among the class of people he reached. Wesley apparently had greater affinities with the Tories of his day than with the Whigs, yet his deep-seated humanitarian sentiments prohibited him from accepting uncritically either the Tory or the Whig conservatism dominant during the century. In his effort to relate the theology of Christianity to the political life Wesley was attempting to demonstrate the on-going relationship between God and the political and social order. It is much too simplistic to conclude, as some have done, that Wesley "was either a slavish servant of the conservative mind or a political vacuity."[1]

Wesley's Socialization

Important to the formulation of Wesley's political thought was his socialization, particularly in terms of the influence of his parents (especially his mother) and in terms of the education he received at Oxford. In both Wesley's religious and political thought there are three ostensibly different and somewhat divergent strains: the individualistic, the collectivist, and the conventional. More will be said of this later, but suffice it to say here that Wesley's socialization contributed most to the conventional elements in his thought. These elements, tying Wesley to what Warner calls the "conservative mind," include such ideas as the majesty of God and his emphasis on order. Moreover, Wesley's socialization contributed to the rather conservative language he used even when expressing new or controversial ideas. His attempts to use historical argument, when available, also suggest his propensity for conservative modes of thought. Unfortunately, most of what little comment there is concerning Wesley's political thought is based on a limited number of his works and these tend to emphasize the conventional attributes of his political views. In the years following Wesley's death, Methodism did much the same thing and ignored or forgot other aspects of Wesley's theological, humanitarian, and explicitly political thought (except for opposition to slavery in England).

---

[1] Wellman J. Warner, The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1930), p. 73.

The Theological Framework

In this study there has been an effort to describe and analyze the totality of Wesley's political thought and the theological premises which are its foundation. In order to do this there was an attempt made to make explicit the theological framework which contributed to Wesley's political ideas. The characteristics Wesley attributed to God on the one hand, and man on the other, were of central importance.

Wesley's view of the nature of God was further subdivided into his notion that God played two roles: that of sovereign (or creator) and that of governor. God as sovereign was omnipotent but God as governor imposed restrictions upon himself. From God's role as sovereign comes all of God's grace. This includes the whole of creation (both physical and social). As a part of the grace God has granted to man there is the possibility of universal salvation. As a result of God's grace there is the possibility for man to achieve Christian perfection. Power and authority in the human institutions of church and state are grants made by God to corporate representatives on earth.

In the concept of God's role as governor Wesley sought an answer to the problem of freedom. In order for God's revelation in Jesus to make sense, man needed to be free, for without freedom man simply was not responsible. Thus, man's responsibility arose out of man's freedom and conscience which in turn were functions of prevenient grace. In the ability of man to respond freely to God lies Wesley's synergism and this contributes the individualistic, subjective, elements of Wesley's theological and political thought. Prevenient (or preventing) grace was a grant by God to man allowing man the ability to differentiate between good and evil. If man could, in reality, distinguish between good and evil, this ability made sense only if man could choose, or not choose, God. Thus, Wesley said, grace is resistable. Moreover, man can participate in God's love. Man has this capacity because God first loved man. As a result of God's love man has himself acquired the ability to love both God and man. Out of this conception of love, arose (in part) his ideas of ethics, justice, and Christian perfection. The love concept itself was (to a large extent) a social idea and this was related to Wesley's thesis that Christianity was essentially a social religion.

The other major theological problem concerned the nature of man. Basic to either theology or political thought is the concept of man, and this is of great importance to Wesley's ideas. Perhaps of greatest importance was the very negative view of man Wesley held. This was premised upon the Christian doctrine of original sin which held that man's nature was wholly depraved as a result of Adam's fall. All men were equally infected. The revelation of God to man in Christ gave to all men the possibility of salvation, though men were always capable of knowingly contravening the will of God. Sin, therefore, had a twofold character. It was on the one hand conceived in terms of the very depravity of human nature which originated in Adam. On the other hand it was thought of as the willful contravention of God's law. The impulse to contravene God's law, however, came partly as a result of the ongoing action of original sin even after justification. It was as a result of sin, in both senses, that the problem of evil arose, and Wesley found evidence of evil in war, class exploitation, and other social problems. Because man is responsible he can also be ethical and moral, and this leads to Wesley's concern for man in the ethical context. His ethics, based on the love concept, are both personal and social. Out of this arises his conception of righteousness. Moreover, because man is sinful, the government has the rather explicit ethical imperative to preserve order. Also related to the love concept are Wesley's ideas of social justice and Christian perfection, which is itself the perfect possession of the perfect motive.

Politics and the Theology of God

From Wesley's theological framework it was possible to proceed with an analysis of Wesley's political thought as it relates to the concept of God, to the concept of man, and to the problem of the relationship between church and state. Perhaps the primary aspect of Wesley's political thought as it relates to his concept of God are the ideas of power and authority. Power for Wesley was in the last analysis the ability to determine whether men lived or died, and consequently the ability to control liberty and property or other lesser values. It was authority, however, rather than power, *per se*, in which Wesley was really interested. Authority, for Wesley, legitimatized the use of power but authority was more than simply a correct form of power. It was an entity by itself and capable of being given by God to human government. Even though God was the source of authority, this did not, for

Wesley, presuppose any particular form of government. In deriving authority from God Wesley was probably closer to Tory ideology than to Whig ideas.

Because so much was dependent upon God's grace there was in Wesley's political thought little place for natural rights or natural law in the sense that these might be known through reason apart from revelation. Man's rights consisted only in special dispensations from God and no right existed in the natural order of things. Wesley also rejected natural law and natural rights as a result of his acceptance of the empirical psychology of the _tabula rasa_. Since all knowledge derived through the senses, and since reason was merely the logical organization of such perception, natural law and natural rights -- in the sense of principles known through reason -- would have been out of the question. In this Wesley was, perhaps, a bit more consistent than Locke, but Wesley's empiricism was not well integrated with other elements of his theology. It is obvious that the whole idea of God was no more valid from these empirical assumptions than were the ideas of natural law and natural rights. Wesley was, apparently, never completely aware of this problem, although at some points he tried to argue that the experience of faith is a similar kind of sense perception to that of touch or sight. He apparently did not make the epistemological distinction between subject and object that was just beginning to be formulated in the eighteenth century, partly as a result of British empiricism. With the rejection of natural law and natural rights came the rejection of contractualism, which was itself a defense of natural rights. In this case, in addition to the two arguments of God's grace and empirical psychology used in his objections to natural law and natural rights, Wesley added the further argument, from Aristotle, that man was naturally a social animal. In rejecting natural law and natural rights Wesley differed to some extent from both Whigs (natural rights) and Tories (natural law) and certainly differed from much of Whig philosophy in rejecting contractualism. Not only were any "rights" man might possess special grants of God's grace, but property itself was possessed by God and only under the stewardship of man. God gave property to man in common for the common good. An unalienable private right to property did not exist. Individuals legitimately held property only so long as they used it according to God's will. This contrasted with the Lockean view that labor, mixed with the property given man by God, made that portion of property an unalienable individual right. This concept of property differed considerably from the dominant "worship" of property by both Whigs and Tories.

Wesley's idea of equality was also in contrast to both Whig and Tory sentiments. This idea also bridged the gap between the notions of God as sovereign and God as governor. Theologically the theory of equality was based on the premise that there was an equality of evil, of grace, and of freedom. It was further exhibited in his ideas concerning race and social structure. Wesley did not translate this egalitarian sentiment into a political theory of democracy, although it did have political manifestations as in his demand for the end of slavery. The not unrelated concept of liberty was an important theme in Wesley's thinking. His demands for liberty stemmed essentially from his feeling that man, in order to exercise his free will, must be largely (though not completely) unimpeded, and from his demands to propagate freely his religious views. Free will was a function of prevenient grace and thus relates the concept of liberty to the idea of God's role as governor. Civil and religious liberty were necessary consequences of God's grant of freedom to the human will. To impede man's use of this freedom would be to contravene God's own will. Liberty, in general, was conceived of in terms of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion. Threats to both civil and religious liberty could come both through the irresponsible use of power and through license. Wesley did not see that civil or political liberty should include the notion of an expanded franchise and was concerned primarily with restraints on individual action in the areas of religion, speech, press, and assembly. Since much of what Wesley wrote on liberty was a defense of the right to propagate the Gospel, it may be suggested that the greatest liberty was the ability to choose God.

Closely related to the idea of liberty are the twin concepts of order and change. Wesley was very concerned about the maintenance of order. Since the state derived authority from God, defiance of the state, or of laws of the state, would be defiance of God. Wesley did attempt to make provisions for change, however. He thought that some particular exceptions might have to be made to the general thesis that defiance of the state was defiance of God, for if the state (or church) contravened God's will, then men were no longer conscience-bound to obey the government of the state. Moreover, Wesley thought that if Christian conversion took place on a rapid and widespread scale, change in the social order would result. He went so far as to justify revolution under some situations. God, too, could himself institute change. Finally, important in Wesley's thought related to the concept of God as governor was the idea of justice. Justice arose out of the demands of love and the governors of the state should themselves be holy as God is holy. Men could be just, in the final analysis, because God himself is just. When justice in the state ceased, God's authority for that state ceased.

Politics and the Theology of Man

As with those political ideas which relate to Wesley's idea of God, one of the more important sets of thoughts that relate to his concept of man is the problem of order and change. The actual need for order arose in Wesleyan thought because man was sinful. The behavioral results of the action of sin (whether as original sin or as a willful contravention of God's law) would be disorder in society. This relates, of course, to what Wesley thought to be one of the primary ethical purposes of the state -- the preservation of order. Though the state could not make man good, it could, nevertheless, mitigate the impact of sin in society. Because man has freedom through prevenient grace man has the possibility to effect change. This is related, of course, to the whole problem of liberty as well. Should governors become corrupt and opposed to God's ordinances, man had no moral compulsion to obey, and if the problem were severe enough, could rightly rebel.

Although Wesley had a high regard for order, it is interesting that his concept of property did not constitute a defense for order, or conversely, order did not necessarily constitute a defense for property as was the case in much eighteenth century political philosophy. The responsibility of man for the use of his property was the human side of the question of property in Wesleyan political thought. Wesley looked back to the primitive communism of the early church as the highest ethical organization of property. In lieu of the possibility of gaining this ideal, he advocated a distribution of wealth shared by the rich with the poor. While most of his appeals were for private altruism he did, nevertheless, advocate governmental intervention from time to time. The whole tenor of Wesley's discussion of property undercuts the interpretation of Wesley that suggests he simply supported the doctrine that wealth implies God's favor. He thought, in fact, that wealth, more often than not, subverted Godly ways.

The principle of equality, too, relates to Wesley's concept of man. Men were essentially equal, he thought, for the reasons expressed earlier and because "love, like death, makes all distinctions void." This belief in equality was exemplified in his attitudes concerning race and social distinctions. Wesley thought that all men, regardless of class or color, participated in man's depravity, in God's grace, in the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and, after Christian conversion, in the ability to act on the motive of love. This led him to defend progressive reform measures, such as the abolition of slavery, but did not lead him to a democratic political theory. Where men were unduly ignorant or bestial (as they sometimes were under slavery) Wesley attributed such qualities to adverse socialization.[2]

Related to the idea of equality is the notion of justice. Among the objectives that justice should secure were liberty and the basic kind of equality suggested in Wesley's appeal for the abolition of slavery. This idea of justice also arose out of the love demands of Christianity and out of the thought that because all men were God's creation they were entitled to respect. In addition to this more generalized concern for justice, Wesley developed an idea which is related to the Aristotelian notion of distributive justice. This was given political relevance in Wesley's demands that punishments ought to be in line with crimes committed and that prisoners should be charged with the crimes they actually committed rather than with some more serious crime. His call for penal reform and his support for such men as John Howard also demonstrate this concern for justice.

Important in Wesley's political thought was his concern for monarchy. It has sometimes been charged that Wesley was a rather uncritical exponent of monarchy. While there is little doubt about his monarchist sentiments, he did not defend monarchy per se. Rather, the monarchy he so much admired was the monarchy of the Revolution Settlement -- a constitutional and limited monarchy. He maintained an unalterable opposition to the despotisms of France and Germany and was highly critical of such English monarchs as Charles the Second. There was no divine right of monarchy and Wesley suggested at one point that God could (and sometimes did) confer authority on any form of government he liked. This appreciation for a limited monarchy went hand in hand with a rejection of democracy. This was related in turn to Wesley's failure to see any need for other than virtual representation of the people of England in Parliament. As a result of this, the theory of representation Wesley adopted corresponds closely to Burke's ideas. In his opposition to Parliamentary reform, especially with respect to representation, Wesley stood with the conservative elements of his day, though neither Whigs nor Tories could themselves claim to be democratic. These interpretations are demonstrated in Wesley's analysis of the American Revolution and the Wilkes affair. It should be remembered, too, that the related problem of consent was one of the more important issues during the eighteenth century. In accepting the notion of virtual representation, in rejecting the idea that power derives from the people, and in denying natural rights, Wesley rejected the necessity for consent.

---

[2] It should be noted that for a time the Methodists in America attempted to preserve Wesley's negative attitude toward slavery. Because of the problems concerning the slave question, however, Methodists in the nineteenth century de-emphasized the earlier position.

With respect to specific areas of possible government responsibility such as economic problems, education, health, and international relations, Wesley's humanitarian spirit is demonstrated. This spirit arose from Wesley's theology and his ethics. In economic relations Wesley apparently thought that there should be a cooperation between public and private sectors with governmental intervention when necessary. Although he did not explicitly advocate governmentally subsidized education or medicine, it is clear that he helped lay the foundations for popular education and public responsibility in the area of health and medicine. With respect to international relations he thought that because of original sin the international milieu was bound to be one of conflict. He recognized, however, that it was difficult to apply private standards of morality to international problems. While Wesley detested war, he nevertheless adopted the attitude that under certain conditions of defense war could be considered just. Of the three major Christian responses to evil and man's depravity -- withdrawal, the idea that the state can inhibit evil, and the theocratic view that the church should dominate society -- Wesley's position is associated with the second response. Historically the concept of the just war and the view that the state can inhibit evil have been associated in Christian political philosophy.

Church and State

Finally, the question of the relationship between church and state was important in the eighteenth century and in Wesley's thought as well. Like the state the church received its authority from God. The church's authority was manifest in terms of its functionaries, deacons, priests, and bishops. The church's authority came from God through Jesus to the apostles and on down through the ages to Wesley's own time in a succession from the apostles. Until the 1740's Wesley believed in the traditional Catholic conception of Apostolic Succession. After reading Lord King's account of the primitive church, however, he came to the conclusion that succession came not through bishops, but through priests. This was a modified juridical view of the church -- a view held by High Church Tories who contended that the church had an authority independent of any authority it received from the state. Thus, Wesley differed from the Erastian attitudes of his age for in his thought the church and the state stood as co-equal in authority. Wesley's thought concerning the church is made somewhat ambivalent due to the acceptance of elements of other doctrines of the church. These other doctrines included the theory which maintained that the church was simply a community of believers. This Whig position stressed the subjective vertical relationship between God and the individual. In Hoadly's political thought this came to mean that the organization of the church was irrelevant and that the church possessed no special mandate from God which could be opposed to the state. Moreover, since religious faith was primarily an individual concern the state could regulate, as it desired, the organization of the church. This unqualified Erastian sentiment Wesley rejected, although he did believe that since the Church of England was an established church the government might have some limited rights of control in matters not pertaining to salvation.

Wesley's doctrine of the church also included elements of the idea explaining the church as the mystical body of Christ. This position has more affinity with ecclesiastical corporatism, but the corporatism tends to be other-worldly rather than this-worldly. In the end the visible church doesn't really matter to advocates of this position either. Wesley rejected this particular extension of the corporate theory of the church as a basis for his political thought. Thus, Wesley stands in the High Church Tory position in terms of the controversy over church and state. Because of Wesley's acceptance of several differing (though not necessarily conflicting) theories of the church, there is a certain ambivalence with respect to the positive nature of the church. While he thought the Church of England the best national church extant, he nonetheless rejected any dogmatic espousal of establishment and suggested at one point that perhaps the system of separation erected in the United States was better. Likewise, he thought there might be several established denominations. His greatest concern was for the maintenance of religious liberty and if establishment should conflict with this, he was willing to give up establishment. Some ambivalence also arises in Wesley's thought with respect to religious liberty in his objection to Catholic Relief. He wanted Roman Catholics in England to have religious toleration but did not wish them to have greater political freedoms. In this he failed to recognize the changes that had taken place in the status of Roman Catholics between 1745 and 1778 as a result of the decreased threat of the Stuart Pretender.

Assessment of Wesley's Politics

In attempting to make an assessment of Wesley's political thought, it is possible to conclude that he had greater affinities with Tory ideology than with Whig ideology. It is not possible, however, to conclude with some critics that Wesley was a "slavish servant of the conservative mind," or with Edwards that while his High Churchmanship was greatly modified, his Tory political thought was not.[3] Several of the ideas in Wesley's political thought, such as the concept of equality and property, differed considerably from Tory thought as well as Whig. In addition, his humanitarian sentiments contributed to his movement away from conservatism. This is illustrated in his ethic of love and in his concerns for the economic, educational, and medical well-being of men, summarized in his comment that his purpose in all this was to do all the good he could. In his ideas concerning God as the source of power and authority, in his juridical conception of the church and his thesis that the church was co-equal with the state, Wesley supported elements of Tory ideology. In his rejection of both natural law and natural rights (and contractualism) he was divergent from both Whig philosophy and Tory traditionalism. All of these ideas and attitudes taken together add up to the conclusion that while Wesley may be described generally as a Tory he was not an ideologue. Perhaps what should be said is that Wesley's "Toryism" is representative of the confused and changing state of political party ideologies in the eighteenth century. Finally, his theology enabled him to develop a theory of dissent, of change, and an embryonic theory of revolution more in the Whig tradition.

---

[3] Maldwyn Edwards, John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 13.

As has been noted, there were three elements in Wesley's political thought: the individualistic, the collectivistic, and the conventional. The conventional elements have already been discussed. The individualistic aspects flow from Wesley's emphasis on the experiential, on the demands of conscience, and on the importance of the notion of liberty as well as on the concept of justification by faith. The collectivist elements of his thought include the idea of original sin, the idea that man apart from community cannot be Christian, the love concept, and Wesley's hopes for society generally. Implicitly there seems to be the thought that the individual in isolation may not be fully human. Likewise, Wesley's theory concerning the church as a juridical body is collectivist in orientation.

Wesley and Christian Political Philosophy

In seeking to summarize Wesley's political thought it is necessary to place him in the broad sweep of the history of political thought. Initially it might be said that Wesley generally fits into what might be termed the Christian political tradition. Attributes of such a tradition would probably include the notion in one form or another that the individual exists in two societies, the church and the state, and that both these societies can make demands upon the individual Christian. An additional tenet of Christian political thought is that power and authority derive essentially from God. This particular thesis stretches from St. Paul in the first century to Jacques Maritain in the twentieth. Various Christian theorists have had varying interpretations of the implications of this view, but the position itself has been a constant one. Filmer, for example, thought that since power derived from God, and since the patriarchal family system seemed to be the oldest political system of which God had approved, then monarchy, as the "logical" extension of the patriarchal system, must be the form of government God would like best. Implicit in the Conciliar Movement, however, and explicit in Maritain, is the notion that God gives power through the people to the state. Virtually all Christian political philosophers have also had to come to terms with the meaning of man's depravity as it affects the political system. Wesley adopted a more or less Augustinian view. Like St. Paul and St. Augustine Wesley also agreed that God, in delivering power, and authority to government saw the need to maintain order; otherwise as a result of man's depravity chaos would ensue. While Wesley was a monarchist (at least as this implied the monarchy of the Revolution Settlement), he nevertheless contended that God did not establish any particular form of government. He seemed to be content with the thought that any political system which worked, was stable, was just, and protected liberty, was ordained of God.

It is not too surprising to find that Wesley had some affinity with many of the major political thinkers of his own day, though he followed none slavishly. In fact, he was a sufficiently independent thinker to be able to repudiate what was probably the most popular maxim of political thought of his day, the concept of the social and/or political contract, whether it took its Lockean, Hobbesian, or Rousseauian form.[4] In terms of his admiration of the political system of his day Wesley was perhaps closest to Locke, although they resembled one another only in their common admiration for the Revolution Settlement, and even in this there was a difference in emphasis. Wesley would have agreed with Hobbes' supposition that the strong state is necessary to preserve order among people possessing an essentially negative human nature, but would have rejected Hobbes' secularism. Wesley would, moreover, demand more safeguards against despotism than would Hobbes and he would have denied the latter's Erastian sentiments. With respect to the Erastian question Wesley was much closer to the position of Law than to either Hobbesian Erastianism or to the Erastianism of the Whigs as exemplified by Hoadly.

---

[4] It should be noted that Tory opinion generally denied the contract theory, but denied it through the acceptance of an organic theory of the state or on some other theory that took ancient traditions into account.

Perhaps the area in which Wesley diverged most not only from his own century but also from traditional Christian political theory, was in his rejection of a natural rights or natural law theory of any kind. With this came also the rejection of contractualism which explained how and why men retained natural rights. The contract theory Wesley rejected on historical and sociological grounds, among which was the Aristotelian assumption of the innate sociability of man. In rejecting the doctrines of natural rights and natural law Wesley used arguments which were not always compatible, since he derived them from God's revelation and from British empiricism. Knowledge, thought Wesley, derived from the senses. Reason was simply the logical organization of sense perception. It was, therefore, impossible to "know" anything through reason. Wesley tried, perhaps not too successfully, to add faith to the list of the means whereby objects are perceived. This confusion apparently arises from an unsystematic rejection of the epistemological distinction between subject and object. In his statements concerned strictly with empirical philosophy Wesley had some affinity with Hume, and this affinity is heightened somewhat by the fact that both men professed an orthodox Toryism while at the same time building theories of politics which undercut some of the assumptions of that Toryism. Wesley went further than Hume in articulating what has heretofore been called his collectivism. This was not, however, the conservative notion of an organic state.[5] An attribute that went into Wesley's conception of collectivism was the position that values and other objects of knowledge are received through social inculcation (notwithstanding the problems this raised with his understanding of values received through revelation). While this idea in itself does not constitute collectivism, it does help buttress some of Wesley's ideas connected with collectivistic attitudes.

Wesley's Influence on Society and Politics

Any assessment of Wesley's influence is a difficult and complex problem. It is difficult and complex because Wesley was both a thinker and an activist and this fact raises the question as to the relative importance of his ideas and his activities. Moreover, a paradoxical attribute is evident in Wesley's thought. On the one hand he refused to admit that the "people" were entitled to the most basic of political rights -- the right to vote. On the other hand, much, if not most, of his theological and ethical thought led to the development of a democratic temper among the "common" people of England. These latter elements of

---

[5] An alternative to the organic concept of the state is one in which the state is thought of as a rational construct (similar to the manner in which Hume conceptualized "artificial" virtues). The contract theory is one such "artificial" view of the state. Since Wesley thought that either God or man could rationally construct a state, he adopted an "artificial" (though not the contract) theory. Since Wesley also believed in the natural sociability of man, however, his "artificial" theory applied only to the form of government rather than to the existence of government.

Wesley's thought helped England build a stable democratic system. Moreover, Wesley's organizational prowess ensured an on-going impact for many of his concerns. At the same time his more conservative ideas -- of order, of authority, and of monarchy -- tended to provide some restraint on the people. Wesley's evangelical religion may have provided an emotional outlet for members of the lower-middle and lower classes which otherwise might have been channeled into political activity.

While some human energy may have been channeled away from politics and into religion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to agree wholly with Lecky that the Evangelical Movement (and indirectly, therefore, Wesley) largely prevented a bloody revolution in England.[6] With all his admonitions concerning the need for order, Wesley could not have prevented revolution had social or psychological conditions been attuned to it. Moreover, there is a sufficient amount of conflict between his admonitions concerning order and his demands for liberty and change to suggest that his ideas could have been (and sometimes were) used to rationalize either stability or change. Likewise, while Wesley had in Methodism a highly disciplined organization, the numbers of people so controlled were never great enough to hold back revolution. It can probably be argued that had Wesley himself wished to turn revolutionary, Methodism might have been used effectively as a conspiratorial agency. But his failure to so use the Methodist Societies does not lend evidence to the contention that he prevented a revolution. Wesley and his movement were, in the final analysis, only a part of the social, political, intellectual, and psychological milieu out of which democracy developed.

---

[6] W. E. H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (6 vols.; New York: D. Appelton and Co., 1887), Vol. II, pp. 691-692. Biographers of Wesley used to suggest that Lecky meant that Wesley himself prevented a bloody revolution in England. Lecky probably placed too much importance on Methodism and the Evangelical Revival in serving the emotional needs of the people. As Wesley himself more than once pointed out, there were significant differences between the social and political circumstances of France--and the Continent generally--and eighteenth century England. These differences--which involved the suppression or non-suppression of aspirations--kept England from revolution. At one and the same time Lecky tends to place too much importance on Wesley and yet to place too little importance on him in terms of such ideas as equality or the popularization of health and educational values.

Because of Wesley's stature in England during his century, and because of the organization he built, Wesley did have a significant influence, however. Particularly in the areas of equality, liberty, justice, health, education, and welfare, Wesley had a positive influence. As has been noted throughout this study, in these areas his influence was recognized by his contemporaries and by subsequent historians. Sometimes -- as in the case of the abolition of slavery or in the defense of freedom of speech and press -- there was a direct political influence. At other times -- as in the case of health, education, and poverty -- the impact was less political than humanitarian. In the organization of Methodism Wesley constructed a model system which was later copied by people more directly interested in social and political reform. Through these influences Wesley prepared many of the people of England -- albeit unconsciously -- for the day when they could accept the responsibility of the democratic franchise. The other side of the problem is that in his objections to greater representation and parliamentary reform, and in his attitudes on power, authority, order, and monarchy Wesley may have had a negative impact.[7]

Summary

Finally, in assessing Wesley it may be suggested that his primary concern with political thought was the relation of God to the political order. His interpretation of the relationship between God, man, and politics has a lasting importance in terms of the on-going efforts of Christian political philosophy to make theology politically and socially relevant. In the final analysis Wesley thought that politics should be interpreted in the light of man's relationship to God. This attitude is related to contemporary Christianity's concern for the social and political life. It would separate him from those fundamentalist sects (which generally have a Free Church orientation) that believe that the church has no mandate to "meddle" in political affairs. That element of his thought that made some social action imperative (his feeling that God required him to do all the good he could) led him to respond to many of the most important problems he found among the people with whom he worked. Wesley provides an example of how one man attempted to relate Christianity to the social and political order.

---

[7] For additional assessments of Wesley's impact see the following: Edwards, John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century, pp. 52-53; Maldwyn Edwards, After Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1935), p. 23; Kathleen Walker MacArthur, The Economic Ethics of John Wesley (New York: Abingdon Press, 1936), p. 141; J. E. Rattenbury, Wesley's Legacy to the World (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1928), p. 251; and E. C. Urwin and Douglas Wollen, John Wesley--Christian Citizen (London: The Epworth Press, 1937), p. 71.

APPENDIX

WESLEY AS EDITOR AND AUTHOR

Wesley's work as an author and editor of political literature is often overlooked, if not forgotten, in the twentieth century. Wesley's writings, even his political works, grew to a large extent out of the Evangelical Revival, and this fact has probably "militated against a sound literary appreciation."[1] Wesley was reared in a family in which the literary arts were encouraged and it is little wonder that John had faith in the power of the printed page. Wesley held the view that the Christian mind must be an informed mind and this took him to rather far flung literary efforts, not only in political matters, but in all aspects of his vocation. He turned out a stream of inexpensive publications for his rather poor flock and this activity alone had implications for the political system of England. In a sense it may be said that "evanglical conversion had as a sequal the overcoming of illiteracy in the individual."[2] Wesley's primary concern in all his publishing enterprises was to extend the good he was able to do for people, and extend it with all the methods at his disposal. The Wesleyan corpus, as it relates to Wesley's political thought, may be divided into the following categories: 1) the Journal; 2) the Letters;

---

[1] George Lawton, John Wesley's English (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1962), p. 13.

[2] Oscar Sherwin, John Wesley! Friend of the People (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961), p. 145.

3) The Sermons; and 4) miscellaneous documents varying from small pamphlets to extensive books and periodicals to compilations of the works of others.

The Journal

The most sweeping of all Wesley's works is the Journal.[3] This was the outgrowth of the diary which he started around 1724 for the purpose of taking a "more exact account than I had done before, of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I employed every hour."[4] The desire to keep better account of his time came from his reading of Jeremy Taylor's Rules for Holy Living and Rules for Holy Dying. Until about 1739, however, there was little need that any but a few close friends or family see the Journal which was a prose restatement of the more cryptic diary. On Wesley's return from Georgia, however, he had need to defend himself against charges resulting largely from his ineptness in the Colony and the Sophey Hopkey affair. He had already at hand in his dairy and embryonic Journal the technique for his defense, so he prepared the first Journal for publication. The first extract published covered the period from Wesley's embarkation to Georgia to his return to London. This use of the Journal as a defensive tool, then, was the most immediate cause of the first publication, and this attribute of the *Journal* stayed with it until Wesley died, even though it became much more than this.[5] The *Journal* demonstrates Wesley's versatility as no other document can. In its pages can be traced not only his own biography and the rise of Methodism, but also his interest in, comments about, and a general picture of life in eighteenth century England. This statement holds true whether the interest be scholarship, literature, medicine, law, religion, or politics. The *Journal* offers evidence that he not only kept up with these problems but with science and philosophy as well.[6] Though some of Wesley's other writings were more viciously attacked, the *Journal* came in for its share of abuse. One eighteenth century writer suggests that the *Journals* were first used as a shield but later Satan was defeated by the sheer weight of them:

---

[3] Richard Green, The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography (London: Published for the Author by C. H. Kelly, 1896), is still the most complete bibliography of Wesley's works. There is a new edition of Wesley's Works now being edited, though, of course, it was not used in this study.

[4] Journal, Works, Vol. I, p. B2 (Preface).

> ... and thrice his massive Journals shook --
> Thrice swung them round -- then hurl'd them up aloft:--
> When by celestial vehemence impell'd
> High and more high they flew, roaring as fierce
> As fiercest Whirlwinds in their airy Flight.[7]

---

[5] *Ibid*, pp. B 2,4.

[6] See also the discussion of this in W. L. Doughty, *John Wesley: Preacher* (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 207. Lawton suggests that Wesley's *Journal* is an "unclassifiable series of documents. Its publication owed something to public interest in, but more to public misunderstanding of the aim and affiliations of Wesley the Methodist. In its early extracts, it was Wesley's apologia, and thence it broadens to become the defense of Methodism. . . . It is at once an intimate literature and a mirror of eighteenth century Britain." (p. 257)

[7] Albert M. Lyles, *Methodism Mocked* (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), pp. 119-120.

Nehemiah Curnock's edition of the *Journal*, a scholarly edition which includes the full diary, is the best version published. The first four volumes of *The Works of John Wesley* also contain the *Journal* in relatively complete form. Both editions have been used in the present study of Wesley's political thought.

The evidence of Wesley's deeply felt concern for the evils he saw around him is found in the *Journal*. Herbert remarks that,

> as one reads of the ghastly conditions he calmly sets forth, one thinks of the polite literature of the Augustan age -- of its preoccupation with wit and the drawing room, with polished style and common-sense, with preferments and advantageous matches. Underneath the apparent stability of the privileged classes the muck of despair was beginning to show motion. This sluggish seething Wesley saw, and its image he preserved.[8]

Through the record of almost sixty years covered by the *Journal* it is possible to see the panorama of contemporary England, but it is largely the England of the poor, of the "common people." In the pages of the *Journal* Wesley rarely stops to analyze the great events of the day except insofar as they affected the lower classes, and "he who is interested in the conditions which prefaced most of the significant social legislation of the past hundred and more years will find the *Journal* a worthy and absorbing document."[9] It is possible to find a little of everything in the *Journal*. In it Wesley is not only seen reporting, but also declaiming. As Lawton says, he "writes defensively -- but he also blazes a trail."[10]

---

[8] Thomas Walter Herbert, *John Wesley as Editor and Author* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 17.

[9] *Ibid.*

The Letters

If the Journal is the most panoramic of Wesley's writings, the Letters provide perhaps the most intimate view of him and are an invaluable supplement to the Journal. The major source of the letters is the Standard Edition edited by John Telford. The Works contain some 900 letters but Telford's scholarly edition contains 2670. This edition has been used exclusively for this study. The Letters are less well known than is the Journal, but they bring closer many of the problems Wesley faced and the way in which he faced them. In the letters it is possible to find Wesley's attitude toward individual people: "No matter what the social standing, circumstances, ability, outlook or religious persuasion of his correspondent, he is treated with respect, with sincerity, with frankness, with firmness yet with kindness."[11] While most of the letters are pastoral, either in the personal sense or in terms of the Methodist connection, the earlier "Oxford" letters are largely personal, being directed to his family and friends. A number of letters, too numerous to mention individually, were written with regard to social and political problems and these are of importance to the present study, though related material is found embodied in many of the other letters. The Letters indicate, too, the wide variety of people with whom Wesley had dealings, from the scholars and highly educated people of the day to those of his Methodists who could barely read or write. His writing style varies, too, with the type of person to whom he is writing: on the one hand it may be learned, drawing upon his wide reading; or on the other, chatty and homey, giving advice where needed. Likewise, his habit of attending to details, a characteristic of his leadership, is apparent in the letters. Through all, however, there is the constant concern for the revival in religion which Wesley was seeking. The whole gamut of Wesley's thought finds expression in the Letters in personal comments on current problems, in well-argued letters to opponents or supporters, and in off-the-cuff personal advice.[12]

---

[10] Lawton, op. cit., p. 259. [11] Ibid., p. 251.

In a very real sense, the Letters "form the marching orders of the Evangelical Revival, and fill up many gaps in our knowledge of the events of that great awakening."[13] The Letters were an extension of Wesley's travels and of his oversight of his scattered societies. While the records of his episcopal duties are biographically and historically important, "there is also, in the Letters, a wealth of interesting facts about numerous spheres of Wesley's interests and activities, which are nowhere else available."[14] A reading of only the Journal gives a somewhat one-sided view of Wesley -- in the Letters is found his concern about the problems of England with America, about the possibilities of a French invasion, or about the evils of slavery. The last letter Wesley wrote was to Wilberforce, encouraging him in his fight to end the slave trade.[15] Wesley's watchword, too, is found in the Letters: "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare, unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of my salvation."[16] In Wesley's letters are found epistles to statesmen, to local-government officials, to religious leaders of a great variety of churchmanship, to politicians, to society people, to mention only a few.

---

[12] For more detail, see Herbert, op. cit., p. 23.

[13] Telford, in the Introduction to the Letters, Vol. I, p. xviii.

[14] Herbert, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

The Letters stand as a supplement to all Wesley's other writings in a special way. Virtually all of his other works — his books, sermons, tracts, Journal — were addressed to the general public. No matter how directly he spoke, what he said was of necessity addressed in general terms. In the Letters, however, the general conception, argument, or piece of advice is modified in view of Wesley's understanding of the personality of the correspondent. Wesley took care in the writing of his letters and they stand out as a work of literature.[17] In comparing Cowper, Walpole, and Wesley as letter writers, Lawton suggests that in viewing "these three men together in these absolutely typical productions, we can the better grasp their individuality, very different, yet very good -- each in his own order." Cowper "simply talks in his letters, distilling his gentle, intimate, natural spirit," while Walpole "is as brilliant but also as hard as a diamond. Walpole gathered up his elegance about him and forgot the kaleidoscope of misery as soon as he had described it." Wesley, on the other hand, "joined the nation upon the streets and in the markets, and like the evangelical prophet, denounced only that he might heal."[18]

---

[15] Letters, Vol. VIII, p. 265 (February 24, 1791).

[16] Letters, Vol. I, p. 286 (to James Hervey, March, 1739).

[17] In February of 1765 he notes that "I employed all my leisure this week in revising my letters and papers. Abundance of them I committed to the flames. Perhaps some of the rest may see the light of day when I am gone." (Journal, Works, Vol. III, p. 204.) At another point he notes that "I retired, and spent the rest of the

It may properly be said that Wesley's letters are a mirror of the man and of the Evangelical Revival. There is no attempt at effect. The essence of the correspondence comes out quite naturally under the impulse of the moment. Unlike the letters of Cowper or Walpole, Wesley's letters have a claim on attention because they were the seventy years' panorama of the Evangelical Revival.[19] The Letters, no less than the Journal, are the literature of a movement. As Lawton avers, their "spontaneity, sureness of touch and clarity are obvious. As a collection they form a unique self-revelation of a holy soul dedicated to a great task."[20]

---

week in answering letters and preparing matter for the Magazine." Journal, Vol. VII, p. 333 (October, 1787).

[18] Lawton, op. cit., pp. 256-257.

[19] Telford, Letters, Vol. I, pp. xxviii.

[20] Lawton, op. cit., p. 257.

The Sermons

Perhaps the most systematic body of Wesley's thought is to be found in the third major segment of his work, the sermons. The most complete selection is to be found in Volumes V-VII of the *Works*, which contain one hundred forty-one complete sermons. E. H. Sugden prepared an annotated edition entitled *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, but this includes only the fifty-three sermons pronounced by Wesley to be the standard statement of Methodist doctrine.[21] The edition of the sermons found in the *Works* is the one used in this study. Wesley viewed his sermons as something of a totality, and wrote that "I cannot write a better sermon . . . than I did seven years ago . . . twenty years ago . . . [or] than I did five-and-forty years ago." Even though he had read more and reflected more, "forty years ago I knew and preached every Christian doctrine which I preach now."[22] Toward the end of Wesley's life he published eight volumes of sermons, some of which had appeared forty years earlier. Others had been reprinted from the *Arminian Magazine*. The First Series (so-called) contains fifty-three discourses, and these were decreed by Wesley to be the doctrinal standard of Methodism. Forty-four of these fifty-three form the present doctrinal standard of British Methodism. The Second Series is contained in the remaining four volumes of Wesley's compilation. After Wesley's death a Third Series was published made up of eighteen sermons published in the Arminian Magazine but not revised by him. The Fourth Series consists of seven sermons published by Wesley in separate form but never included in a collection. The Fifth (and final) Series was prepared from eight manuscripts found among his papers after his death.[23] All five series are reproduced in the Works.

---

[21] *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, ed., E. H. Sugden (London: The Epworth Press, 1921, 1935). Of this work Lawton (p. 12) comments that "except for the identification of numerous classical and some English allusions and quotations, literary questions are there quite subordinate to Sugden's doctrinal and dogmatic purpose, and his edition may be put aside for our purpose."

[22] *Journal*, *Works*, Vol. IV, p. 135 (September, 1778).

The sermons cover a wide range of topics but are largely devoted to an exposition of characteristic Methodist doctrines. Several were commemorative, others were presented for Oxford, and were, therefore, academic, a few were preached on behalf of some humanitarian society or another, while one significant series is devoted to the Sermon on the Mount. The written sermon was a characteristic mode of expression in eighteenth century literature and Wesley's sermons apparently had wide popularity then no matter how they are viewed in the twentieth century.[24] Thus, sermons were no particular novelty, though Wesley's deal with an unusually wide range of topics.

Broadly speaking there are three classes of sermons: 1) those concerned with the experiential doctrines of the Christian faith; 2) those dealing with Christian doctrines of a more systematic nature; and 3) a miscellaneous category dealing with matters of morals, expediency, and general decency. All of the sermons "are Scriptural -- Scriptural in block -- quotation, allusion, language, 'feel'; and spirit."[25] The first group of sermons deals with those doctrines that Wesley thought "experientially" verifiable: faith, love, Christian perfection, justification by faith, and so forth. The second group deals with problems bearing upon such subjects as the holy trinity, the person and work of Christ, and the nature of the atonement. These subjects do not form a great body of sermons, or, for that matter, any other part of Wesley's writings, for these were always the assumed starting point, the basis, of Wesley's thought about almost everything. There were some sermons, however, devoted to these problems. The third class of subjects link theology and ethics into a series of practical discourse on such subjects as the "Use of Money," or the series on the Sermon on the Mount, or marriage, or education.[26]

---

[23] Doughty, op. cit., p. 84.

[24] Ibid., p. 161.

Miscellaneous Documents

The fourth major literary source of Wesley's political thought may be found in a number of writings which vary greatly in kind and extent. His miscellaneous writings may be categorized into four segments: 1) the documents which deal (in a single work) with more than one topic; 2) the theological and religious writings forming the basis for his political thought; 3) the pamphlets on political and social issues which he produced; and 4) the abridgments, compilations, and periodicals he published.

---

[25] Lawton, op. cit., p. 241. [26] See Doughty, op. cit., pp. 84-101.

General Documents

Some of Wesley's publications contained statements or comments on a wide variety of subjects. One of the most important of these is the Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Reverends Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and Others. This was a series of six digests issued during the life of Wesley in which he gave a summation of the minutes of the several annual conferences along with some additional comments. The series is often called The Large Minutes and was first published in 1753. Although these were ostensibly "minutes" of conversations, they were, in reality, Wesley's summarization of those conversations. In The Large Minutes are found the more or less official Methodist positions on a wide variety of theological, ethical, social, and political questions.[27]

Another example of a rather general publication is Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the New Testament (1755). This is designated as a general (rather than a religious) work due to the fact that in commenting about the multiplicity of problems in the New Testament he involved himself in other than strictly theological or religious questions. Wesley claimed that he interpreted the Bible literally, and though he may be described as a literalist, he cannot be classed with those who use the Bible in an uneducated manner, though his approach to biblical criticism was indeed rather crude.[28] His Notes, however, have real bearing on his political thought, for he consciously tried to draw concepts -- including those concerned with politics -- from biblical sources. For this reason his commentary on appropriate passages gives insight into his views concerning the political order.[29]

---

[27] Minutes of Several Conversations, Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 299-338; see also, Green's Bibliography, p. 82, no. 164.

Also classed as publications of a more general nature are three of Wesley's tracts on Roman Catholicism. These particular pieces demonstrate Wesley's concern for both the theological and political aspects of Roman Catholicism. In Advantage of the Members of the Church of England over the Members of the Church of Rome (1753) Wesley was primarily concerned with a defense of the English church and contends that the English church is more scriptural.[30] His Roman Catechism (1756) was published in response to the charge that the Methodists were linked with Roman Catholicism and in alliance with the Stuart Pretender. This work was a virtual copy of a writer in the days of James II a century earlier.[31] Popery Calmly Considered (1779) was written with a twofold purpose: to reconcile some of the Calvinist Methodists and to argue against the spread of Roman Catholicism. This tract was published during the period of agitation surrounding the Catholic Relief Act.[32] These three publications, which form only a part of Wesley's writings concerning Roman Catholicism, were all broad gauged and are concerned with both theological and political questions.

---

[28] For Wesley's own analysis of his approach to biblical criticism see Letters, Vol. III, pp. 128-129 (May, 1755).

[29] John Wesley, Explanatory Notes on the New Testament (London: The Epworth Press, 1958).

[30] Advantage . . . over . . . the Church of Rome, Works, Vol. X, pp. 133-140. See Green, Bibliography, p. 80, no. 161.

[31] Roman Catechism, Works, Vol. X, pp. 86-128. See Green, Bibliography, p. 99, no. 179.

Theological and Religious Writings

In two of his most extensive works, Wesley considered his most important doctrines, original sin and Christian perfection. The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason and Experience (1757) was written in reply to a book on the same doctrine by Dr. John Taylor. This extensive book (in its original, 522 pages) is most important for this study for it is here that Wesley seeks to deal with the moral state of mankind and tries to account for it with the traditional concept of original sin. Much of the book is made up of a point by point refutation of Taylor and thus suffers from the lack of any unity of design.[33] In his Plain Account of Christian Perfection: 1725-1777, Wesley gave his most comprehensive account of this doctrine. This volume was the final of four editions beginning in 1766 and in it Wesley traced his development of the doctrine through his own writings.[34] In these two books Wesley touches on more than theological problems but they were written primarily in theological exposition.

---

[32] Popery Calmly Considered, Works, Vol. X, pp. 140-158. See Green, Bibliography, p. 199, no. 336.

[33] The Doctrine of Original Sin, Works, Vol. IX, pp. 196-464. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 100-101, no. 164.

[34] Christian Perfection, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 366-446. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 134-135, no. 278.

While a large number of Wesley's miscellaneous works are devoted to theological problems, there are several which have special importance for an analysis of his political thought. In particular, his controversy with the Calvinists brought forth several important tracts and included the following: Dialogue between a Predestinarian and His Friend (1741), Predestination Calmly Considered (1752), and Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty (1777).[35] The latter is of significant importance for in it Wesley explored the distinction between God's roles as sovereign and governor. Related to the Calvinist controversy, but concerned primarily with the problem of freedom and free will, were The Question: What is an Arminian? (1770), and Thoughts upon Necessity (1774).[36] In the former Wesley attempted to define his use of the term "Arminian," and in the latter he wrote against the notion of man as a mere machine and against Calvinist determinism.

Political and Social Pamphlets

For some reason (which is not at all clear) Wesley's works that are directly related to political and social problems were, with one exception, written after 1770.[37] The one exception, A Word to a Freeholder (1748), was written against electoral graft and bribery and in defense of that "Parliament man" who loved God, King, and Country.[38] There are two possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, and perhaps most likely, it was not until after 1770 that Wesley felt that he could turn his attentions away from Methodism to comment extensively on social and political problems. Second, it is possible, though very remote, that Wesley's interest (as a propagandist) in things social and political was not really kindled until after 1767. The latter contention is made even more unlikely, however, by the fact that he mentions social and political problems in his Journal and in his Letters about as much prior to 1770 as after. It is possible, too, that the social and political problems which arose in England after 1770 were of a character which he felt demanded more extensive comment.

---

[35] Dialogue, Works, Vol. X, 259-266, Green, Bibliography, p. 18, No. 24; Predestination Calmly Considered, Works, Vol. X, pp. 204-259, Green, pp. 76-77, no. 155; Thought's upon God's Sovereignty, Works, Vol. X, pp. 361-363, Green, p. 189, no. 319.

[36] The Question, Works, Vol. X, pp. 358-360, Green, Bibliography, pp. 147-148, no. 260; Thoughts upon Necessity, Works, Vol. X, pp. 457-474, Green, pp. 175-176, no. 300.

During the period immediately following 1770 two problems were of the utmost importance in England. The first was the continuation of the Wilkes affair and the second was the deteriorating relationship with the American colonies. Somewhat related to the Wilkes problem was Wesley's Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs (1770).[39] This tract was a defense of the King, his Ministers, and Parliament. In it Wesley describes some of the social and moral problems he thought beset the nation. In two tracts published two years later, in 1772, Wesley attempted to explore the problems of power and liberty. Attention had been focused on these concepts as a result of the Wilkes controversy. In Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power Wesley defended the thesis that power comes from God and governments rule as a result of God-given authority.[40] Thoughts upon Liberty, also written against Wilkes, asserted that Englishmen did, in fact, possess liberty.[41] Wesley was convinced that many of the problems confronting the government during this period were caused by economic distress. In Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions (1773) he expressed this view and expounded on the economic ills of Britain. In this pamphlet he advocated governmentally imposed curbs on land and on the consumption of luxuries as well as a reduction of taxes and of the national debt.[42]

---

[37] At various times during the period to 1770 Wesley commented in some depth on social and political problems in personal letters or in letters sent to editors of various publications. His major activities as a political pamphleteer came after 1770, however.

[38] A Word to a Freeholder, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 196-197. See Green, Bibliography, p. 51, no. 104. In 1767 Wesley published a pamphlet entitled A Word to a Smuggler, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 174-178, which has some minor value to the study of his political thought. In this pamphlet he attempted to show the evil and distress smuggling caused. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 135-136, no. 239.

---

[39] Free Thoughts, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 14-30. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 149-150, no. 264. This was written originally as a letter in 1768. See Letters, Vol. V, pp. 370-388 (to a friend, December, 1768).

[40] Origin of Power, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 46-52. See Green, Biblography, p. 159, no. 280.

[41] Thoughts upon Liberty, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 31-45. See Green, Bibliography, p. 159, no. 279.

[42] Thoughts upon the Present Scarcity of Provisions, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 53-58. See Green, pp. 165-166, no. 286.

The American Revolution stirred Wesley to publish his most numerous political, and certainly his most controversial, tracts. In all, excluding frequent references in his *Journal*, Wesley wrote 51 separate documents on the American War. Among these documents were eight pamphlets which dealt with various questions the war raised. The most important, at least in terms of the extent of its publication, was Wesley's *A Calm Address to our American Colonies* (1775). This tract, which appeared to be based on Samuel Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*, attempts to justify the right of Parliament to tax the colonies.[43] The *Calm Address* elicited the most savage attack on Wesley that had been made until that time, even though the Government's reaction to the pamphlet was highly favorable and, according to Tyerman, it ordered that copies of the pamphlet be distributed at the doors of all metropolitan churches.[44]

---

[43] *A Calm Address*, *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 80-89. See Green, p. 189, no. 305.

[44] Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (3 vols; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), Vol. III, p. 186. Tyerman estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 copies of the pamphlet were printed and distributed. For a discussion of the satiric reaction see Lyles, pp. 120-123. The most bitter criticism came from Augustus Toplady (*An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feathered* [London: John French, 1775]). Toplady claimed (p. 3) that "some days ago, A methodist Weather-cock saluted the Public with a Two-Penny paper (extracted by whole paragraphs together from the aforesaid Doctor [Samuel Johnson]), ycleped [called], *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*." As a result of such criticism Wesley, in the second edition of the *Calm Address*, made acknowledgment of his debt to Johnson and included a reply to a more serious critic, Caleb Evans (*A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* [London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775]).

During the period of the American War seven additional pamphlets were published by Wesley. Each of them discussed many of the issues raised in earlier works concerning liberty, power, authority, representation, and other questions. They included A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain (1776) which was aimed at protecting the people and warning them about the dangers of revolution.[45] During the same year Wesley published Some Observations on Liberty (1776) which went a bit beyond an analysis of English liberty and attempted to demonstrate that the Americans wanted not liberty but independence.[46] In another tract entitled A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England (1777) Wesley again tried to subdue what he interpreted to be an incipient revolt.[47] During the early part of 1778 Wesley wrote two additional pamphlets, virtually the same, and with the same motives: to pacify criticism of the government during the American Revolution. In A Serious Address to the People of England, with Regard to the State of the Nation (1778), Wesley sought to demonstrate that while England was having difficulties, things were not as bad as some would have the people believe.[48] The same theme was considered in A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland (1778).[49] Both pamphlets reiterate Wesley's views on slavery, extensively elaborated in Thoughts upon Slavery (1774), and he goes on to deny the notion that the loss of the slave trade as a result of the war was bad.[50] The last tract Wesley published on the American conflict was perhaps his most serious. In his Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion (1780), Wesley proposed a constitutional union along the lines suggested in 1774 by Joseph Galloway, at first a member of the revolutionary Congress but later a Loyalist emigre. Wesley was attempting to reunite England and America, but with too little, too late.[51]

---

[45] A Seasonable Address, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 119-128. See Green, Bibliography, p. 184, no. 311.

[46] Observations, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 90-118. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 183-184, no. 310.

[47] Calm Address to . . . England, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 129-139. See Green, Bibliography, pp. 187-188, no. 316.

[48] A Serious Address, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 140-148. See Green, Bibliography, p. 193, no. 327.

Abridgments, Compilations, Periodicals

Finally, in assessing the literary sources of Wesley's political thought mention must be made of some of the multi-volumed editions, primarily of the works of other men, that he produced. The most monumental of these efforts was the Christian Library.[52] Though the largest of Wesley's publications, this work was more important for its educational value and as an illustration of the faith Wesley had in education than for any direct relevance it has in assessing his political ideas. The prefaces to works such as the Christian Library and to other abridgments are of greatest value in illustrating Wesley's general notions. This is particularly true in regard to his Wisdom of God in the Creation: or a Compendium of Natural Philosophy (1763, 1770, 1777), The Desideratum (1760), and Primitive Physic (1747). The prefaces for these works and the whole of his A Compendium of Logic (1750) provide insight into Wesley's conceptions of science.[53] The Arminian Magazine, a periodical which was Wesley's most sustained publishing effort, must also be mentioned, for in it articles sometimes appeared for the first time which had relevance to his political thought. An example of this, "A Disavowal of Persecuting Papists," appeared in the magazine in 1782, and the title summarizes the content.[54] The first issue of the periodical appeared in January, 1778, and this magazine came to have a "niche in the history of religious journalism."[55]

---

[49] A Compassionate Address, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 149-154. See Green, Bibliography, p. 193, no. 329.

[50] Thoughts upon Slavery, Works, Vol. XI, pp. 59-79. See Green, Bibliography, p. 175, no. 298.

[51] John Wesley , Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion (London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfield, 1780). See Green, Bibliography, p. 202, no. 341.

[52] Lawton, op. cit., p. 264.

Conclusion

In summary it may be said that the most important literary sources for Wesley's political thought are found in his Journal,

---

[53] Christian Library (Preface), Works, Vol. XIV, pp. 220-233; Wisdom of God (Preface), ibid., pp. 300-303; The Desideratum (Preface), ibid., 241-244; Primitive Physic (Preface), ibid., pp. 307-318; A Compendium of Logic, ibid., pp. 161-189.

[54] A reprint of this appears in Works, Vol. X, pp. 173-175.

[55] Lawton, op. cit., p. 264.

Letters, and Sermons, for virtually everything that he thought is reflected in these. Since this is true, any analysis of Wesley's thought on any subject must use these sources extensively. The various miscellaneous works, however, often provide amplifications of his political thought concerning particular matters of importance to Wesley. For this reason, the books and pamphlets he published may not be set aside as incidental. One obvious factor emerges from a thorough study of the Wesleyan corpus and this is the immense variety of literary forms he used as well as the great variety of subjects in which he was interested. These attributes, in addition to the fact that Wesley was primarily a propagandist or an ideologue and not a systematic thinker, led, in part, to the inconsistencies in his thought. Inconsistencies also arise not so much from different periods in his life as from attempts to reconcile conflicting ideas (original sin and empirical epistemology, for example), from simply changed opinions (as in the case of his interpretation of the office of bishop), or from changing social or political situations (as in the differences between Wesley's earlier and later views of the American Revolution). From the Wesleyan corpus it is also possible to offer the judgment that Wesley in politics (as in other spheres of activity) was writing largely for the purpose of "doing good" and for the purpose of assisting men to conform to what Wesley thought was God's will. In this sense almost none of the writings which Wesley produced could be termed speculative. It was through his writings, however, that Wesley exercised a great influence over the people of England in the eighteenth century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Wesleyan Corpus

Published Collections

Wesley, John. *The Arminian Magazine: Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption*, I-XIV (1778-1791).

________. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Edited by Nehemiah Curnock. 8 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1916.

________. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*. Edited by John Telford. 8 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1931.

________. *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*. Edited by E. H. Sugden. 2 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1921, 1935.

________. *The Works of John Wesley*. Edited by Thomas Jackson. 14 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d., photo offset from the authorized edition published by the Wesleyan Conference Office in London, England, 1872.

Individual Works

________. *The Advantage of the Members of the Church of England over those of the Church of Rome* (1753), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 133-139.

________. *Advice to a Soldier* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 198-202.

________. *Advice to the People Called Methodist* (1745), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 351-359.

________. *Advice with Respect to Health. Extracted from a Late Auther* (1769), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 254-259 (Preface).

________. *Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection* (1767), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 446-447.

________. *A Calm Address to our American Colonies* (1775), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 80-89.

________. *A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England* (1777), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 129-139.

________. *The Character of a Methodist* [1742], Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 339-346.

________. *A Christian Library: Consisting of Extracts From, and Abridgments of, The Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity Which have been Published in the English Tongue* (1749-1755), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 220-223 (Preface).

________. *A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland* (1778), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 149-153.

________. *A Compendium of Logic* (1750), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 161-189.

________. *A Concise Ecclesiastical History, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the Present Century* (1781), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 296-299 (Preface).

________. *A Concise History of England, from the Earliest Times, to the Death of George II* (1776), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 272-275 (Preface).

________. *The Desideratum: or, Electricity made Plain and Useful. By a Lover of Mankind, and of Common Sense* (1760), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 241-244 (Preface).

________. *A Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend* (1741), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 259-276.

________. *A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend* [1744], *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 266-276.

________. *Directions to the Stewards of the Methodist Society in London* (1747), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 515-516.

________. *A Disavowal of Persecuting Papists* (1782), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 173-174.

________. *The Doctrine of Original Sin, According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience* (1757), *Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 191-464.

________. *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1744), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 1-45.

________. *An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Times* (1782), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 156-163.

________. *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*. London: The Epworth Press, 1958. First published, 1755.

________. *An Extract from a Reply to the Observations of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe, on a Pamphlet entitled, Letters to a Nobleman*. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1781.

________. *An Extract from "A Short View of the Differences Between the Moravian Brethren, (so called,) and the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley"* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 201-204.

________. *An Extract of a Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount* H**e *on his Naval Conduct in the American War*. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1781.

________. *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1745), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 46-247.

________. *Farther Thoughts on Separation from the Church* (1789), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 272-274.

________. *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs* (1770), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 14-33.

________. *Hymns for the National Fast, Feb. 8, 1782*. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1782.

________. *Hymns for the Nation in 1782*. Parts I-II. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1782.

________. *How Far is it the Duty of a Christian Minister to Preach Politics?* (1782), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 154-155.

________. *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others, From the Year 1744, to 1789* (1789), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 299-338.

________. *Modern Christianity, Exemplified at Wednesbury, and other Adjacent Places in Staffordshire* (1743), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 169-193.

________. *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, &c* (1743), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 269-271.

________. *Notes on "The Apostolic Canons."* Printed as an Appendix to Bowmer, John C. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*. London: Dacre Press, 1951, pp. 233-237.

________. *Of the Gradual Improvement of Natural Philosophy* (1784), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 482-488.

________. *The Origin of Image-Worship Among Christians* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 175-177.

________. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, As Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, From the Year 1725 to the Year 1777* (1777), Works, Vol. XI, pp. 366-445.

________. *A Plain Account of the Kingswood School* (1781), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 289-301.

________. *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist* (1748), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 248-268.

________. *Popery Calmly Considered* (1779), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 140-158.

________. *Predestination Calmly Considered* (1752), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 204-259.

________. *Primitive Physic: or, an Easy and Natural Method of Curing most Diseases* (1791, first published, 1747), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 305-318 (Preface).

________. *The Principles of a Methodist* (1740), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 359-374.

________. *The Question, "What is an Arminian?" Answered. By a Lover of Free Grace* (1770), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 358-361.

________. *The Real Character of Montanus* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 485-486.

________. *Reasons Against a Separation from the Church of England* (1758), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 225-232.

________. *Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion*. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1780.

________. *Remarks on the Count de Buffon's "Natural History"* (1782), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 448-455.

________. *Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge* (1784), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 488-499.

________. *Remarks upon Mr. Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding"* (1781), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 455-464.

________. *Remarks on the State of Kingswood School* (1783), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 301-303.

________. *A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome: With a Reply Thereto* (1751), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 86-128.

________. *Rules of the Band Societies* (1738), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 272-274.

________. *A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain. Respecting the Unhappy Contest Between us and our American Brethren: With an Occasional Word Interspersed to those of a Different Complexion. By a Lover of Peace* (1776), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 119-128.

________. *A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend* (1745), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 276-284.

________. *Selections from John Wesley's "Notes on the New Testament."* Edited by John Lawson. Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, 1955.

________. *A Serious Address to the People of England, With Regard to the State of the Nation* (1778), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 140-148.

________. *Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon* (1755), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 1-13.

________. *Sermons on Several Occasions*, *Works*, Vols. V-VII (Series 1-5).

________. *A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, Near Bristol* (1768), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 283-289.

________. *A Short History of Methodism* [1764] , *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 347-350.

________. *A Short Method of Converting all of the Roman Catholics in the Kingdom of Ireland: Humbly proposed to the Bishops and Clergy of that Kingdom* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 129-132.

________. *Some Observations on Liberty: Occasioned by a Late Tract* (1776), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 90-118.

________. *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: or, a Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (1784), *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 300-303 (Preface)

________. *A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children* (1783), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 474-477.

________. *A Thought upon Necessity* (n.d.), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 474-480.

________. *Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power* (1772), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 46-52.

________. *Thoughts on Separation from the Church* (1788), *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 263-264.

________. *Thoughts on the Character and Writings of Mr. Prior* (1782), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 418-425.

________. *Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions* (1773), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 53-58.

________. *Thoughts upon Baron Montesquieu's "Spirit of the Laws"* (1781), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 413-416.

________. *Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty* (1777), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 361-364.

________. *Thoughts upon Jacob Behemen* (1780), *Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 509-514.

________. *Thoughts upon Liberty* (1772), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 34-46.

________. *Thoughts upon Necessity* (1774), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 457-474.

________. *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 49-79.

________. *Thoughts upon Taste* (1780), *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 456-470.

________. *A Treatise on Baptism* (1756), *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 188-200.

________. *Unpublished Letters*. *Methodist History*, XI [Whole Series] (April, 1963), 38-60.

________. *A Word in Season: or, Advice to an Englishman* (1745), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 182-186.

________. *A Word to a Freeholder* (1747), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 196-198.

________. *A Word to a Smuggler* (1767), *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 174-178.

Books on Wesley and Methodism

Anderson, William K. (ed.). *Methodism*. Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947.

Bowmer, John C. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*. London: Dacre Press, 1951.

Cameron, Richard M. *Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1961.

Cannon, William R. *The Theology of John Wesley*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1946.

Cell, G. C. *The Rediscovery of Wesley*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935.

Clark, Eliza. *Susanna Wesley*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1886.

Doughty, W. L. *John Wesley: Preacher*. London: The Epworth Press, 1955.

Edwards, Maldwyn. *After Wesley*. London: The Epworth Press, 1935.

———. *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century*. London: The Epworth Press, 1955.

[Evans, Caleb]. *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*. London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775.

Faulkner, J. A. *Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918.

Goodloe, Robert M. *The Sacraments in Methodism*. Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1953.

Green, J. Brazier. *John Wesley and William Law*. London: The Epworth Press, 1945.

Green, Richard. *The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography*. London: Published for the Author by C. H. Kelly, 1896.

Green, V. H. H. *The Young Mr. Wesley*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961.

Herbert, Thomas Walter. *John Wesley as Editor and Author*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940.

Hill, A. Wesley. *John Wesley among the Physicians*. London: The Epworth Press, 1958.

Lawton, George. *John Wesley's English*. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962.

Lee, Umphery. *John Wesley and Modern Religion*. Nashville: Cokesbury, 1936.

Lindstrom, Harald. *Wesley and Sanctification*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d., written in 1946.

Luccock, H. E., and Hutchinson, Paul. *The Story of Methodism*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1926.

Lyles, Albert M. *Methodism Mocked*. London: The Epworth Press, 1960.

MacArthur, Kathleen Walker. *The Economic Ethics of John Wesley*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1936.

McConnell, Francis J. *John Wesley*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1939.

The Methodist Church. "Articles of Religion," *Doctrine and Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1960*. Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1960. Pp. 30-32.

Nottingham, Elizabeth Kristine. *The Making of an Evangelist*. Gettysburg, Pa.: Thesis for Ph.D. in the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University, for the Author, by Times and News Publishing Co., 1938.

Peters, John Leland. *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956.

Piette, Maximim. *John Wesley and the Evolution of Protestantism*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937.

Rattenbury, J. E. *The Conversion of the Wesleys*. London: The Epworth Press, 1938.

________. *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*. London: The Epworth Press, 1948.

________. *Wesley's Legacy to the World*. Nashville: Cokesbury, 1928.

Schmidt, Martin. *John Wesley: a Theological Biography*. Vol. I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Sherwin, Oscar. *John Wesley: Friend of the People*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961.

Simon, John S. *John Wesley and the Advance of Methodism*. 2nd ed. London: The Epworth Press, 1955.

________. *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*. 3rd ed. London: The Epworth Press, 1952.

________. *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*. 2nd ed. London: The Epworth Press, 1955.

________. *John Wesley: The Last Phase*. London: The Epworth Press, 1934.

________. *John Wesley: The Master Builder*. London: The Epworth Press, 1927.

Snell, F. J. *Wesley and Methodism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.

Southey, Robert. *Life of Wesley*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1890.

Starkey, Lycurgus M., Jr. *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Thompson, Edgar W. *Wesley: Apostolic Man*. London: The Epworth Press, 1957.

Todd, John M. *John Wesley and the Catholic Church*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958.

[Toplady, Augustus]. *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feathered*. London: Printed for John French, in the Poultry; Mary Lewis, Pater-Noster-Row; and the Booksellers at the Royal Exchange, 1775.

Tyerman, Luke. *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.* 3 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872.

Urwin, E. C., and Wollen, Douglas. *John Wesley -- Christian Citizen*. London: The Epworth Press, 1937.

Warner, Wellman J. *The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930.

Watson, Richard. *The Life of Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1854.

Wearmouth, Robert F. *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England, 1800-1857*. London: The Epworth Press, 1937.

Williams, Colin W. John Wesley's Theology Today. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960.

Journal Articles Pertaining to Wesley

Baker, Frank. "John Wesley's Churchmanship," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review (July, 1960), 210-213.

Chase, F. Stuart. "The Theology of Arminius," The London Quarterly and Holborn Review (October, 1960), 248-252.

English, John C. "John Wesley and the Principle of Ministerial Succession," Methodist History II [New Series] (January, 1964), 31-36.

Kissack, Reginald. "Wesley's Concept of his own Ecclesiastical Position," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (January, 1961), 57-60.

Lipson, Leslie. "The Two Party System in British Politics," American Political Science Review XLVII (June, 1953), as reprinted in Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings. Edited by Macridis, Roy C., and Brown, Bernard E. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1961.

Madron, Thomas Wm. "John Wesley on Race: A Christian View of Equality," Methodist History II [New Series] (July, 1964), 24-34.

Snell, John. "The Political Thought of Adam Ferguson," The Municipal University of Wichita Bulletin (May, 1950), reprint no. 21.

General Philosophical, Theological, and Ethical Works

Aristotle. The Ethics. Translated by J. A. K. Thomson. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955.

Becker, Howard, and Barnes, Harry Elmer. Social Thought from Lore to Science. 3 vols. 3rd ed. New York: Dover Publications, 1961.

Harkness, Georgia. Christian Ethics. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957.

________. Understanding the Christian Faith. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1948.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960.

Natason, Maurice (ed.). *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. New York: Random House, 1963.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *A Theology for the Social Gospel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d. First Published, 1917.

Walker, Marshall. *The Nature of Scientific Thought*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Works on Political Philosophy

Bainton, Roland H. *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960.

Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Genius of American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Carpenter, William Seal. *Foundations of Modern Jurisprudence*. New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, 1958.

Cherry, George L. *Early English Liberalism*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1962.

Dahl, Robert. *Modern Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Easton, David. *The Political System*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

Ekirch, Arthur A., Jr. *The American Democratic Tradition*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963.

Filmer, Robert. *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*. New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1947.

Friedmann, W. *Legal Theory*. Toronto: The Carswell Co., 1960.

Friedrich, Carl J. (ed.). *Authority*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Gooch, G. P. *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

Hacker, Andrew. *Political Theory*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Part I. Chicago: Gateway, 1965.

Lasswell, Harold D., and Kaplan, Abraham. *Power and Society*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Locke, John. *Of Civil Government--Second Treatise*. Chicago: Gateway, 1955.

MacIver, R. M. *The Web of Government*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947.

Maritain, Jacques. *Man and the State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Patterson, Edwin W. *Jurisprudence*. Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, 1953.

Russell, Bertrand. *Power: A New Social Analysis*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962.

Sabine, George H. *A History of Political Theory*. 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.

Schermerhorn, Richard A. *Society and Power*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Strauss, Leo, and Cropsey, Joseph (eds.). *History of Political Philosophy*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963.

Voegelin, Eric. *Order and History*. Vol. I, *Israel and Revelation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956.

Wanlass, Lawrence C. *History of Political Thought*. New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, 1953.

General Historical Works

Bendix, Reinhard. *Work and Authority in Industry*. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Boyd, William. *The History of Western Education*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950.

Butts, R. Freeman. *A Cultural History of Western Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955.

Eby, Frederick. *The Development of Modern Education.* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952.

Elliot, Arthur. *The State and the Church.* London: The Macmillan Co., 1882.

Green, John Richard. *A Short History of the English People.* Rev. ed. New York: A. L. Burt Co., n.d.

Hammond, J. L., and Hammond, Barbara. *The Age of the Chartists.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930.

Hurd, J. C. *Law of Freedom and Bondage in America, 1858-1862.* 2 vols. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1862.

Knorr, Klaus E. *British Colonial Theories, 1570-1850.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963.

Laski, Harold J. *The Rise of European Liberalism.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962.

Mackenzie, Kenneth. *The English Parliament.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950.

Newman, George. *Health and Social Evolution.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Social Sources of Denominationalism.* New York: Meridian Books, 1957.

Oxnam, G. Bromley. *Christianity and the British Labor Party.* New Haven: National Religion and Labor Foundation, n.d.

Patterson, M. W. *A History of the Church of England.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912.

Tawney, R. H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.* New York: New American Library, 1961.

Wearmouth, Robert M. *Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century.* London: The Epworth Press, 1948.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

The Eighteenth Century Background

Abbey, Charles J., and Overton, John H. *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887.

Adamson, John William. *Pioneers of Modern Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905.

Anderson, M. S. *Europe in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

Bates, Walter Jackson. *From Classic to Romantic*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946.

Becker, Carl L. *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Boswell, James. *Life of Samuel Johnson*. New York: Random House, n.d.

Bredvold, Louis I. *The Literature of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Collier Books, 1962.

Carter, C. Sydney. *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Church Book Room Press, 1948.

Christie, Ian H. *Wilkes, Wyvill and Reform*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1962.

George, M. Dorothy. *England in Transition*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953.

Hammond, J. L., and Hammond, Barbara. *The Skilled Labourer, 1760-1832*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920.

Hart, Jeffrey (ed.). *Political Writers of Eighteenth Century England*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Hazard, Paul. *The European Mind*. New York: World, 1963.

Hearnshaw, F. J. C. (ed.). *The Social and Political Ideas of some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1923.

Howard, John. *The State of the Prisons*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1929. First Published, 1777.

Knight, Helen C. *Lady Huntington and Her Friends*. New York: The American Tract Society, 1853.

Kronenberger, Louis. Kings and Desperate Men. New York: Vintage Books, 1959.

Laski, Harold J. Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham. London: Home University Library, 1919.

Lecky, W. E. H. A History of England in the Eighteenth Century. 6 vols. New York: D. Appelton and Co., 1887.

Legg, J. Wickham. English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914.

Lindsay, J. O. (ed.). The New Cambridge Modern History. Vol. VII, The Old Regime. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.

Marshall, Dorothy. Eighteenth Century England. New York: David McKay, Co., 1962.

Overton, J. H. Life in the English Church, 1660-1714. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885.

Reynolds, J. S. The Evangelicals at Oxford. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. The Social Contract. Translated by Willmore Kendall. Chicago: Gateway, 1954.

Trevelyan, G. M. History of England. Vol. III. Garden City: Doubleday, 1956.

Turberville, A. S. English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Voltaire. Philosophical Dictionary. Translated by Peter Gay. 2 vols. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962.

Wesley, Charles. The Protestant Association. London: Printed by J. Paramore, at the Foundry, Moorsfields, 1781.

Willey, Basil. The Eighteenth Century Background. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

Wolf, A. A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Bros., 1952.

Zoll, Donald Atwell. Reason and Rebellion. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Reference Works and Documents

Black, Henry Campbell. *Black's Law Dictionary*. 4th ed. St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1951.

Browning, Andrew (ed.). *English Historical Documents*. Vols. VIII, X. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1953, 1957.

Encyclopedia Britannica. "King (of Ockam), Peter King," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. XIII. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1953.

Henning, William Walker (Compiler). *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619*. 13 vols. Richmond, Va.: W. W. Hening, 1819-23.

Leotscher, Lefferts A. (ed.). *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1955.

Thorne, J. O. (ed.). *Chamber's Biographical Dictionary*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961, 1962.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Wm. Madron was born October 4, 1937, in Salt Lake City, Utah. After completing his elementary and secondary education he attended Westminster College, Salt Lake City. While an undergraduate Madron majored in political science and minored in history. As a junior in college he participated in the Washington Semester Program of The American University in Washington, D. C.

After graduation with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1959 Madron accepted a position on the staff of Senator Frank E. Moss of Utah. During the period from June, 1959, to July, 1960, Madron completed the course work for the Master of Arts degree at The American University. Early in 1960 he married the former Miss Beverly Brown. During the summer of 1960 the Madrons returned to Salt Lake City, where he was employed first as a staff member of a Democratic gubernatorial candidate and later as an instructor at Westminster College. While teaching during the 1960-1961 academic year Madron also completed some graduate course work at the University of Utah. A son, Thomas Taylor, was born while the Madrons were in Salt Lake City.

Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, accepted Madron in 1961 into its Doctor of Philosophy program in Political Science, providing him with a substantial financial grant. The period from 1961 to 1963 saw the completion of course work for the Ph.D. and the production of the first draft of Madron's dissertation, _The Political Thought of John Wesley_. In 1963 he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Political Science at Lambuth College, Jackson, Tennessee. The following year he was awarded the Master of Arts degree from The American University.

In September, 1964, Madron assumed a new position as Assistant Professor of Political Science at Lycoming College, Williamsport, Pennsylvania. While fulfilling his teaching responsibilities at both Lambuth and Lycoming Madron completed the dissertation for the Ph.D., which was awarded by Tulane University, New Orleans, in August, 1965.

Madron is a member of the American Political Science Association, the Southern Political Science Association, and the American Association of University Professors. He is an active Democrat and is the president of the Lycoming County Democratic Council.